175 posts were established there, and Marsa Matruh became the
648 capital town. The Western Desert was administered by British officers who had under their command a garrison of Egyptian soldiers. Their assignment was to secure the colonial borders. This task included keeping the Awlad 'Ali within the boundaries of Egypt. The policy of the British provincial government was to avoid interfering with the Bedouin process of law and conflict regulation unless it threatened the peace and security
[124] of the desert. My informants said that the British interfered with Bedouin justice only under the threat of large-scale tribal warfare.

175 The political relationship which the Bedouins of the
795 Awlad 'Ali tribe had with the Sanusi Order of Islam in Libya
[619] was historically not so important compared to that of the other Cyrenaican tribes. The Sanusi Order, classified as a Sufi _tariiqa_ ("mystic order"), was actually quite orthodox in its attitudes and practices. This is a function of the socio-religious conditions of its origin during the 18th-19th century revival of orthodoxy in Islamic Arabia (Gibb 1955:
[793] 127-145). Muhammad bin 'Ali al-Sanusi founded his order, al-Sanusiyya, near Mecca around the year 1837. The Sanusi doctrine may be considered orthodox, or secularly oriented, in that it rejects the fundamental goal of Sufism, mystical union with God.

The Sanusi Order, from the very beginning, strove for a return to pure Islam. It made its greatest headway among

175 the Bedouins of the Hijaz area. This Sanusi success aroused
795 the jealousy and animosities of the orthodox 'ulama ("clergy")
[798] of the Mecca area. Al-Sanusi was forced to flee the Arabian
[793] peninsula, and in 1843 he founded his first zawiya ("lodge"),
[346] al-zawiya al-baida, in Cyrenaica. The Sanusi doctrine was as
acceptable to the Bedouins of Cyrenaica as it had been to the
[793] tribes of the Hijaz. The person and teachings of al-Sapusi
al-kabir ("the grand Sanusi"), as he came to be known, fit
into the "holy man" religious tradition of Cyrenaica and even
spread beyond into the Sudan and Lake Chad area. The Order
[793] showed primary concern for the people of the desert: the
[346] Sanusi shaikh ("holy man") cared for the poor, and the zawiya
485 became rest stops, storehouses, and religious centers where
[794] Bedouin children were taught their Quranic lessons. Through
175 the zawiya, the Sanusiyya became a political and economic
795 integrating factor in the desert, and al-Sanusi became the
346 legitimate authority of the Bedouins. The zawiya became a
182 very important part of the traditional desert economic system.
[793] Today one zawiya remains near al-Qasr but it is scarcely used.
The Bedouins say: "Before, when Alexandria was far away by
camel, we could get what we wanted at the zawiya. Now that we
have trucks and trains no one goes to the zawiya."

175 The fortunes of the Bedouin became linked with those
795 of the Order. When the Sanusi became involved in full-scale
648 conflict with the Italian colonial power, the Bedouins bore

#613 he was insistent upon his right to have her. She went to
619 see the "holy man," al-Sanusi, who lives near al-Qasr. (Al-
578 Sanusi is a descendent of "the Great Sanusi," the founder of
582 al-Sanusiyya, who now lives in Egypt after having been exiled
• 793 from Libya.) Al-Sanusi decided to keep the girl at his farm
#613 until he could decide a course of action. One night, the
619 girl's cousin secretly came to the Sanusi farm and found her
578 room. The girl was sleeping. The cousin struck a match, the
582 girl awoke and was frightened. She jumped from her bed and
793 began to run, in so doing she fell down a flight of stairs
683 and suffered a rupture. This was a serious offense which the
cousin had committed, and al-Sanusi decided that he should call
all of the 'awaaqil of the area to inform them of this. In the
meantime, he sent the girl back to her home and the cousin
continued to bother her concerning his rights over her.
[584] The cousin went so far as to "offer the blood-sacrifice for
her," a stage in the marriage process which signifies that the
union has been consented to by both families. The girl's
father was dead, and her brothers and uncles were unable to
keep the cousin away from the girl. (It may be assumed that
they were conscious of his rights to bint 'amm.) They had
even beaten him once. All of the 'awaaqil of 'Ali Ahmar and
[692] 'Ali Abyad, and the Marabtiin in the al-Qasr area came to meet
with al-Sanusi at his farm. He (al-Sanusi) said that they all

*613 must come because he, himself, was a Libyan and a member of
619 no tribe in Egypt. Al-Sanusi's petition was two-fold: he
578 said the cousin should be punished for violating his right of
582 privacy and property, and the question concerning the cousin's
•793 right to the girl should be settled. The 'awaaqil decided
683 that al-Sanusi should be awarded a kubaara of 1000 L.E. from
692 the tribes of the area, and that the girl should be permitted
to marry no man of the Qinaishat tribe. Al-Sanusi refused to
accept the kubaara, and this was the correct thing to do since
the kubaara, especially a large one, is only offered ritualistic-
ally. The 'awaaqil took note of the cousin's rights to his
bint 'amm: they said that since the girl refused to marry him
it would not be right if she married anyone else from the tribe.
*613 Furthermore, the 'awaaqil, on the basis of the cousin's behavior
619 in this matter, decided that the cousin was insane and should
734 be committed to an asylum. They informed the police in Marsa
[648] Matruh of this diagnosis and decision, and the police came and
transported the boy to the mental hospital in Cairo where he
is today. The uncles of the boy signed the papers which com-
mitted him.

554 The rajal khair, then, is a broker in social relation-
571 ships, a manipulator of loyalties. As a member of the "status
627 group," he can afford to spend time and money in courting his fellow tribesmen, and, as a result, can accrue prestige and loyalty. This role, like that of the 'aqila, is a secular
[681] one. The sanctions which it controls are as economical as those of the 'aqila's are political. In this sense, they are differentiated from the role of rajal saalih whose sanctions are sacred in nature.

554 The traditional role which we define as that of the
792 rajal saalih, "the holy man," was probably much more important
[798] in the past than it is today. In al-Qasr, there are only two rajal saalih who share in traditional power: the one is a resident of al-Qasr proper, and the other, a member of the prestigious Sanusi family, lives near Marsa Matruh.

The rajal saalih of al-Qasr, i.e. the local "holy man," is assured of status because he is an ashraf, one who claims descent from the family of the Prophet. He is also a
[561] member of the elder age-set, and while he is not rich, he cannot be considered poor. Though the "holy man" al-Sanusi
[793] lives near Matruh, he participates in the authority structure of al-Qasr and is a member of the "status group." He is sometimes referred to as rajal saalih kabir, "a great holy man," by virtue of his Sanusi heritage.

[771] The relative unimportance of this role as compared to that of the rajal khair in conflict regulation is a function

His main function is to manage the affairs of the village, apprehend criminals, report and register births and deaths, collect taxes and represent the government in all matters involving the relationship between the government and his village. Because of his position as the representative of the govrernment, he usually enjoys a considerable amount of power which, over the years, many omdas have used it to obtain personal benefits.

In 1958 the committee appointed for the examination of the possibility of applying the system to Awlad Ali noticed that villages in the sense of a compact settlement similar to that existing in the rural area simply do not exist in the Western Desert region. There are a few settled communities in the area but they are scattered homes or a few stores. These communities have no identifiable boundaries or administrative existence. The area as a whole is divided into ten administrative districts, each having a police station. These districts correspond to the old Senusia Zawyas which played an important role in maintaining order in the era until the First World War. Until that time the area was divided into fourteen zones each of which was under the jurisdiction of one of the zawyas. The zawyas were mainly religious centers, or shrines, inhabited and directed by a member of the Senusi order of Cyrenaica. The role of the head of the zawya was to teach the Qoraan and spread the teachings of the Senusi order. One of the ways the zawyas attracted followers was through distribution of food and clothing to those who joined it. The zawyas also provided places of refuge for those who needed protection since no one could force his way into the sacred zawyas. Because of their religious position which put

795 Because of their religious position which put
195 them outside the tribal structure, the leaders of the zawyas played a
627 significant role in mediation and settling disputes between various tri-
793 bal segments. At their disposal was their ability to ostracize anyone
[626] who did not abide by their decision from the zawyas, which meant depriving him from all the benefits, social as well as religious, that membership in the zawyas offered.

795 After the First World War when the British replaced the Turks as
195 governors of the area, the zawyas were closed and the religious leaders
177 ordered to leave. The zoning established by the zawyas existed, however,
[648] and was used as the basis for the redistricting of the area. Police
[631] stations replaced the religious centers. From the standpoint of the tri-
[625] bal population itself, the districts have no psychological or political
619 reality. The zawyas were originally established in the areas of tribal
634 concentrations. But the area itself did not have any political identity.
[795] The only reality from the standpoint of the inhabitants was the tribal
[361] reality and affiliation which cut across many of these districts. Many of the tribal segments inhabiting one district were and still are hostile to one another. To transform the zones into administrative districts and
177 to establish one office of leadership for the whole district was to im-
634 pose a political unity nonexistent among the tribal segments inhabiting
619 the district. To avoid this difficulty, the government supplemented the
[622] territorial principle of the omda system in the rural area with the principle of tribal representation and came up with a system which seems to suite the situation in the Western Desert. For each of the districts, a list of all tribal segments which habitually occupy the area and whose tribal land is located within the district, is made. The most powerful

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which the soul experiences God. It is suffused with knowledge: not with *'ilm*, intellectual and traditional knowledge, but with *ma'rifa*, gnosis, wisdom. The Grand Sanusi and his successors very strongly disapproved of external aids to this end, such as processions, music, movements of the body inducing convulsions, piercing the flesh with sharp implements, and such other means as are used by some Orders, and steered a middle course between the illuminative, or intuitive, school of Sufi writers and the rational, or intellectual, school. Thus Sayyid Ahmad al-Sharif, his grandson, has in his writings, as Moreno points out,[1] exhorted followers of the Order not to depart from the rational, the chief aim of the Sanusiya being to make a man a good Muslim rather than a good mystic. Mysticism is something added to orthodox faith and morals, not a substitute for them.

It is for this reason that, as Sayyid Ahmad insists, perfection is to be sought through spiritual identification with the Prophet Muhammad rather than with God, at any rate for ordinary people. This is to be attained by contemplation of the essence of the Prophet and by an inner knowledge of him through constant imitation of his actions, attention to his words, and blessing him. The contemplation should be so intense that veneration of the Prophet pervades the adept till at last he hears only his name and has only his form before the eyes of the intellect. Then the Prophet becomes his sole guide and counsellor.

As this is not a treatise on Sufism there is no need to give further details about the mystical content of the Sanusiya. It should, however, be stressed that the rigorous orthodoxy of the Order, and especially its insistence on conformity to the original teachings of the Prophet, meant that the faith and morals which the Prophet preached to the Bedouin of his day, and which they accepted, were equally suited to the Bedouin of Cyrenaica, who in all essentials were leading, and still lead, a life like to that of the Bedouin in Arabia in the seventh century. In particular, the refusal of the Grand Sanusi to allow the more demonstrative forms of ecstasy, which, together with lack of organization and direction, characterize so many of the Sufi Orders of North Africa, enabled the Bedouin to adopt his teachings and ritual, for Bedouin are an undemonstrative people and it is difficult to imagine them piercing their cheeks with skewers, eating glass,

[1] M. M. Moreno, *Brevi Nozioni d'Islam*, 1927, p. 58.

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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or swaying into convulsions. Indeed, it is noticeable that the Orders which permit such practices, notably the 'Arusiya, 'Isawiya, Rifa'iya, and Sa'adiya, so popular in the towns of Libya, have made no converts among the true Bedouin.

It is unnecessary to discuss further the mystical side to the Sanusiya for another reason. The Bedouin of Cyrenaica with whom this book is concerned have only the slightest knowledge of either the religious teachings or the ritual of the Order, and are interested in neither. They belong to the illiterate class of the *Muntasabin*, the simple adherents of the Order who follow its Shaikh personally and politically. It is very seldom, if ever, that the Bedouin know the special prayers and litanies of the Order, and their use of them, if any, is restricted to getting a scribe to write them on paper so that they can sew them up in leather and tie them to their bodies. It is only a tiny educated minority who regularly recite the prayer formulas and litanies. These are the *Ikhwan*, the Brothers of the Order. They live in the lodges of the Order and hold prayer-meetings there. Among the Brothers are some who have been raised to the position of Shaikhs of lodges, generally, in past times, after special training at the University of the Order at Jaghbub oasis, where they have received a diploma from the Head of the Order or from one of his family or inner circle. This inner circle, the *Khawass*, consists vaguely to-day of a few senior members of the Sanusi family and two or three learned Brothers and does not function as a Body, but in the past it was, according to Sayyid Muhammad Idris, an official Council controlling the affairs of the Order and was composed of four Shaikhs of the Order, who were not of the Sanusi family, under the presidency of the Head of the Order, who had to be a member of the founder's family. As Dr. Adams points out,[1] the fact that this inner circle is no longer a determinate Body indicates a change in the character of the Order, a development of its political, to the detriment of its religious, functions. This development has favoured the interests of the Sanusi family to the disadvantage of the Order as a whole.

The *Shaikh al-Tariqa*, Head of the Order, advised in past times by his Council, appoints the Shaikhs of the lodges and these Shaikhs can ordain Brothers and the Brothers can receive

[1] C. C. Adams, 'The Sanusiya Order', *Handbook on Cyrenaica*, 1944, p. 31.

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into the Order ordinary members. This is done simply by the two persons concerned shaking hands and reciting the *fatiha*, the opening verse of the Koran, together. These categories can hardly be regarded as grades and I can cite the authority of Sayyid Muhammad Idris to support the opinion that they have never meant more than that some persons were recognized as more learned than others and therefore better qualified to recite the longer and more advanced religious exercises.

II

The Grand Sanusi's desire to create around him a society living the life of primitive Islam and his missionary zeal gave an impression, enhanced by the austerity of his Bedouin followers and the remoteness of the Sahara, of excessive puritanism and fanaticism; and some writers have compared the Sanusi movement to the Wahhabi movement on account of these supposed traits. Duveyrier's account,[1] used very uncritically by other writers, is largely to be blamed for the exaggerated stories of the secrecy, puritanism, fanaticism, power, and numbers of the Order that were current at the end of the last century and in the first decade of the present century and which much prejudiced it in the eyes of European Powers with interests in North Africa. With Duveyrier it was an axiom that any foolhardy European who got himself killed in North and Central Africa had been assassinated by Sanusi agents and that any setback to French interests was due to their propaganda.

It is true that the Grand Sanusi, like the founder of the Wahhabi movement, aimed at restoring what he conceived to be the original society of the Prophet. Neither was peculiar in doing so, for every Muslim preacher must have the same aim. The Grand Sanusi forbad the drinking of alcohol and the taking of snuff and at first, though not absolutely, smoking. But all Muslims are forbidden alcohol and many who are neither Sanusi nor Wahhabi think that smoking is best avoided. It is untrue, as has been asserted, that the Sanusi are forbidden coffee. The Bedouin of Libya do not drink coffee, only tea, in

[1] H. Duveyrier, *La Confrérie Musulmane de Sidi Mohammed ben 'Alî es Senoûsî et son Domaine géographique en l'Année 1300 de l'Hégire = 1883 de notre ère*, 1884.

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praise of which many poems have been written by Brothers of the Order. The Grand Sanusi forbad music, dancing, and singing in the recitations of the Order, but in this he was at one with all the official spokesmen of Islam. Most reformist movements in Islam tend towards asceticism.

Far from being extreme ascetics, however, the Sanusi Brothers eat and dress well, even using scent, and are amiable and merry companions. The Tunisian scholar and traveller Muhammad 'Uthman al-Hashaishi, who travelled in 1896 via Malta, Tripoli, and Banghazi to Kufra to visit al-Sayyid al-Mahdi and met the leading Brothers of the time, remarks that 'they are fond of diversions, honest jesting. I have visited many of their zawiyas and I have made the acquaintance of many of their notables: I have seen only cheerful and smiling faces, welcoming me with benevolence and kindness. May God reward them!'[1]

The Grand Sanusi discouraged the trappings of poverty by his example, his exhortations, and his insistence on the Brothers being self-supporting. Although the Heads of the Sanusiya Order, like the Wahhabi leaders, encouraged settlement on the land, they can hardly have hoped to have greatly influenced the Bedouin to this end; but they insisted on the lodges of the Order supporting themselves by agriculture supplemented by stock-raising, and thereby took a stand against *ittikal*, the dependence for livelihood on alms and not on labour which some mendicant Orders have advocated.

The Order has always been, in fact, conventional as well as orthodox. In its early period it was essentially a missionary Order with the limited aim of bringing by peaceful persuasion the Bedouin Arabs and the peoples of the Sahara and the Sudan to a fuller understanding of the beliefs and morals of Islam, while giving them at the same time the blessings of civilization: justice, peace, trade, and education. Its principles were, as Shaikh Muhammad 'Uthman says, simply 'to do good and avoid evil'.[2]

The accusation of fanaticism is not borne out by either the character of the Bedouin adherents of the Order or by its actions.

[1] Mohammed ben Otsmane el-Hachaichi, *Voyage au Pays des Senoussia à travers La Tripolitaine et les Pays Touareg*, 1912, p. 128 (1st ed., 1903).
[2] Ibid., p. 86.

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8 ORIGIN AND EXPANSION OF THE SANUSIYA

The desire to establish in North Africa conditions in which Muslims might live by their own laws and under their own government, as they did in Arabia under the first four Caliphs, led the Grand Sanusi and his successors to oppose the Turkish way of life and the influences and innovations of Western Christendom, but their intransigence in these matters did not imply intolerance, far less aggressiveness. Though some writers have made assertions to the contrary, the Sanusi have never shown themselves more hostile than other Muslims to Christians and Jews, and the Grand Sanusi and Sayyid al-Mahdi scrupulously avoided all political entanglements which might bring them into unfriendly relations with neighbouring States and the European Powers. The Brothers of the Order were discouraged from discussing political questions. Nor were the Sanusi intolerant towards fellow Muslims who differed from them. Shaikh Muhammed 'Uthman records of Sayyid al-Mahdi that 'the persons he dislikes the most are those who speak ill of Muslims'.[1] The leaders of the Sanusiya have always tolerated other and rival Orders, even when they have disapproved of their rites. The Grand Sanusi had himself been a member of a succession of Orders before he started his own and he allowed, as his successors have done, members of other Orders to belong to the Sanusiya at the same time.

The leaders of the Order have also been tolerant towards the cult of saints, unlike the iconoclastic Wahhabi, who have destroyed even the tombs of those nearest to the Prophet himself. The view held by the doctors of orthodox Islam is that, though intercession through a saint is unlawful and the only mention of him during prayers at his tomb should be to ask the mercy of God on his soul, it is permissible to show respect to his tomb and his memory. The heads of the Sanusiya have, however, always tolerated among their Bedouin followers a regard for holy men and their tombs which goes beyond mere respect. It is unlikely that they felt any repugnance to the cult, because they counted among their forbears several saints and were themselves brought up in North Africa where the cult of saints is widespread and very near to the hearts of the common people; and they could not have remonstrated with the Bedouin for believing that holy men and their tombs are sources of *baraka*,

[1] Op. cit., p. 121.

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of a people to live according to their own traditions and institutions. To-day this desire is expressed in the political language of nationalism. In the past it was expressed in religious movements. Arab nationalism is not a new phenomenon. Only its dress is new.

As will be seen in the chapters which follow, conditions in Cyrenaica were particularly favourable to the growth of a politico-religious movement such as the Sanusiya became. It was cut off by deserts from neighbouring countries, it had a homogeneous population, it had a tribal system which embraced common traditions and a strong feeling of community of blood, the country was not dominated by the towns, and the Turkish administration exercised very little control over the interior. It was, as will be seen, the tribal system of the Bedouin which furnished the Order with its political foundations just as it was the tribesmen of the country whose hardiness and courage enabled it to stand up to the succession of defeats it had to endure.

The reasons for the political success of the Sanusiya Order in Cyrenaica will appear in the course of this account, and here I wish to draw attention to one of them only. It has been said that its rites and teachings were, like the Bedouin character, austere without being fanatical, and that it tolerated the cult of saints to which the Bedouin were accustomed, the Grand Sanusi becoming, in fact, a kind of national saint; but it must be added that the acceptability of its teachings and the fact that the Grand Sanusi could at once be placed by the Bedouin in the familiar category of *Marabtin*, holy men coming to preach and settle in Cyrenaica from the west, cannot alone account for the remarkable success of the Sanusiya movement. The Bedouin of Cyrenaica had heard similar teachings before from similar teachers and had paid them the same degree of attention as they paid to the Grand Sanusi, but these earlier missionaries won only a personal and local following for themselves and their descendants, whereas the Grand Sanusi established himself and his family as leaders of a national movement, a position they have now held for three generations. Leaving aside the remarkable personality of the Grand Sanusi and without here discussing whether the time at which he taught was particularly favourable to the growth of the move-

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ment to which his teachings led, it may be said that the great difference between the Grand Sanusi and the earlier holy men whose tombs are homely landmarks all over Cyrenaica was that, while they were, all of them, in the eyes of the Bedouin, Marabouts, the Grand Sanusi was also the head of an Order which gave to him and his successors an organization. Moreover, unlike the Heads of most Islamic Orders, which have rapidly disintegrated into autonomous segments without contact and common direction, they have been able to maintain this organization intact and keep control of it. This they were able to do by co-ordinating the lodges of the Order to the tribal structure.

III

The more recent Islamic Orders are to be found principally in North and West Africa. The Sanusiya is one of the most recent of them. Its founder was an Algerian scholar, al-Sayyid Muhammad bin 'Ali al-Sanusi al-Khattabi al-Idrisi al-Hasani, a very remarkable man, mystic, missionary, and Marabout. The Sayyid Muhammad bin 'Ali al-Sanusi is usually spoken of in Cyrenaica as *al-Sanusi al-Kabir*, the Grand Sanusi, and I generally refer to him thus in this book.

The Grand Sanusi was born of a distinguished family of Sharifs at a village near Mustaghanim in Algeria about 1787. Early in life he became noted for his intelligence, piety, and profound learning, considered fitting ornaments to his noble birth. He studied first at Mustaghanim, then at Mazun, and later at the famous mosque school at Fez in Morocco, where he learnt theology, jurisprudence, exegesis of the Koran, and the other usual subjects of a Muslim student of the time. There he seems to have developed an interest in mysticism, having come under the influence of the Moroccan Order of the Tijaniya Darwishes. He left Fez when in the early thirties in order to make the pilgrimage to Mecca, though a Turkish biographer says that one of his reasons for leaving Morocco was to avoid possible unpleasantness with the authorities, who were alarmed lest his propaganda for the greater unity of Islam, his life's aim, might have political consequences.[1] They had small cause for alarm as his efforts seem to have made little impression on the

[1] Salim bin 'Amir, *Majallat 'Umar al-Mukhtar*, No. II, 1943–4, p. 2.

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*795 people of Fez, but, if the story is true, the suspicion of those in
• 793 authority would have been his first experience of the kind of
159 opposition he was later to encounter in Cairo and Mecca.
*175 He went from Fez to southern Algeria and thence to Qabis, Tripoli, Misurata, and Banghazi, preaching everywhere on his way. He had already gathered around him his first disciples (*Ikhwan*), mostly Algerians, and in their company he made his way to Egypt by the coastal route from Banghazi and stayed there a few weeks. He had intended to study at al-Azhar, but he seems to have aroused the jealousy of the Shaikhs of the University and to have irritated them by his reforming zeal and his speculations, and so departed for Mecca. Short though his stay in Cairo had been it is probable that the independence of the Khedive Muhammad 'Ali and the cultural and intellectual revival going on there left their mark on his mind.[1]

He remained in the Hijaz for about six years, studying under a number of Shaikhs at Mecca and al-Madina. He is said to have returned to Mustaghanim in about 1829 and not to have visited the Hijaz again till 1833. On this second visit, which lasted for eight years, he was accompanied by a considerable number of disciples from the west. He continued his reformist agitation and his studies under learned Shaikhs at Mecca. The man who influenced him most, and whose favourite pupil he became, was Sayyid Ahmad bin Idris al-Fasi, the fourth Head of the Moroccan Order of the Khadiriya or Khidriya Darwishes, a branch of the Shadhiliya Order, and later the founder of a new sub-Order of his own, the Idrisiya or Khadiriya-Idrisiya. Sayyid Ahmad Idris had aroused the hostility of the doctors of the Maliki rite at Mecca, by whom he was regarded as unorthodox, and went into exile into the Yaman, where he was accompanied for two years by the Grand Sanusi. On Sayyid Ahmad Idris's death in the Yaman, his two chief disciples organized his followers into two new sub-Orders, the Mirghaniya and the Sanusiya, the latter being organized and led by the Grand Sanusi, who established its headquarters at Mt. Abu Qubais, near Mecca, in 1837. This year is regarded as the official date of the foundation of the Order.

It will have been noted that the Grand Sanusi was influenced by a wide range of Sufi tradition and had affiliated himself to a

[1] Salim bin 'Amir, *Majallat 'Umar al-Mukhtar*, No. I, p. 12.

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number of Orders before he founded his own. It has been recorded that he was influenced by the Moroccan Tijaniya Order and that at Mecca he became the favourite pupil of the founder of the Idrisiya Order, which derived its tenets from the basic Shadhiliya Order. In his student days he became a member of other Orders: Shadhiliya, Nasiriya, Qadariya, and perhaps others.[1] His catholicism was not peculiar among the Sufis, and in his case he seems to have joined a large variety of Orders with the deliberate intention of learning their rites and doctrines at first hand so that he could combine all that was best in each of them in a new Order which would be the crown of Sufi thought and practice. It must not be supposed that on this account his teaching was a mere amalgam of the tenets of earlier Orders. Original it was not, but it was a consistent and carefully thought out way of life.[2]

The new Sanusiya Order made such rapid progress, especially among the Bedouin of the Hijaz,[3] that it excited the jealousy and fear of the various authorities in Mecca, the *'Ulama*, the Sharifs, and the Turkish Administration. There can be little doubt that the real objections to the Order were that it threatened the prestige and privileges of these authorities, but they were framed in less revealing language. It seems to have been held against the Order that it lowered Sufi standards to accommodate itself to Bedouin laxity in religious matters, and that it verged on heresy.

Faced with serious opposition the Grand Sanusi did what his teacher Sayyid Ahmad Idris had done in similar circumstances: he left the Hijaz, in about 1841, accompanied by many of his disciples, to return to his native land. After spending some months in Cairo, he continued his journey westwards to Siwa oasis, where he was taken sick and spent several weeks recuperating and instructing the people of the oasis in the faith. In the following year he reached Tripoli by the desert route. On his way to Qabis from that town he heard of the new French advances in his homeland and decided in view of them to return to Tripoli and thence to Banghazi. It would appear therefore

[1] Ibid., p. 6; Adams, op. cit., p. 22.

[2] Carlo Giglio, *La Confraternità Senussita dalle sue Origini ad Oggi*, 1932, p. 17.

[3] A. Le Chatelier, *Les Confréries Musulmanes du Hedjaz*, 1887, *passim*.

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that he did not choose Cyrenaica as his field of labour but was compelled to settle in Libya for a time because the road to the west was closed by the French and the road to the east by the authorities in Cairo and Mecca. The Grand Sanusi was a cosmopolitan, a townsman, and more at home in the schools and libraries of Fez, Cairo, and Mecca than amid the lentisk and juniper of the Cyrenaican plateau or the thyme and wormwood of its rolling plains. Even after founding in 1843 what has become the Mother Lodge of the Order, al-Zawiya al-Baida, on the central Cyrenaican plateau, not far from the ancient city of Cyrene, and while the Sanusi movement was still young in the country, he returned in 1846 to Mecca and stayed there till 1853. Altogether he spent only about ten years of his teaching life in Cyrenaica, whereas he spent some twenty years in the Hijaz.

On his return to Cyrenaica he seems to have felt the need for greater solitude. He was then nearing seventy years of age and doubtless felt that what was left to him of life should be given to contemplation, prayer, and study. It may be true also, as is commonly stated in books written by Europeans, that he desired to place a wide stretch of desert between himself and the Turkish authorities who, as the Sanusiya movement grew, began to take greater interest in it. He therefore first went to live for a short while at al-'Azziyyat on the southern edge of the plateau, where he built a zawiya, and afterwards at Jaghbub, about 160 km. from the sea.

Jaghbub, now to become the centre of the Order and the seat of an Islamic University second only in Africa to al-Azhar, was till 1856, when the Grand Sanusi made it his seat, an uninhabited oasis, in which the water was brackish, highly sulphurous, and insufficient to irrigate more than a small area of gardens. It was not a place for luxurious living, though it seems to have been healthy and, unlike Siwa, free from malaria; but it had certain political advantages. It was out of reach of the Turkish, French, or Egyptian governments, it was on the main pilgrimage route from North-west Africa through Egypt to Mecca, and this pilgrimage route bisected at the oasis one of the trade routes from the coast to the Sahara and the Sudan. Moreover, since Cyrenaica is a peninsula, it was the most central point he could have chosen at that time to be in equal

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touch with the lodges of his Order in Cyrenaica, Tripolitania, the Western Desert of Egypt, and the Sudan.

In moving the seat of his Order to Jaghbub, the Grand Sanusi was probably most influenced by his decision to direct his missionary propaganda southwards. It is understandable that he should have made this decision. His was a missionary

The Spread of the Sanusiya in North Africa.

mind and the Order he had founded a missionary Order, and the pagan and semi-pagan countries of the Sahara and the Sudan, and of Equatorial Africa beyond them, offered endless scope for conversion to the faith. Moreover, his Order was already reaching the limits of its expansion in North Africa. It had won over the nomad and semi-nomad Bedouin tribes of Cyrenaica, Tripolitania, and Egypt, and the oases folk under their influence, but was not making, and was not even in its heyday to make, much impression on the peasants and townsmen up against whom it now found itself in Northern Tripolitania and the Nile Valley. Dammed to west and east the Order

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
(1837-1942) Sanusi

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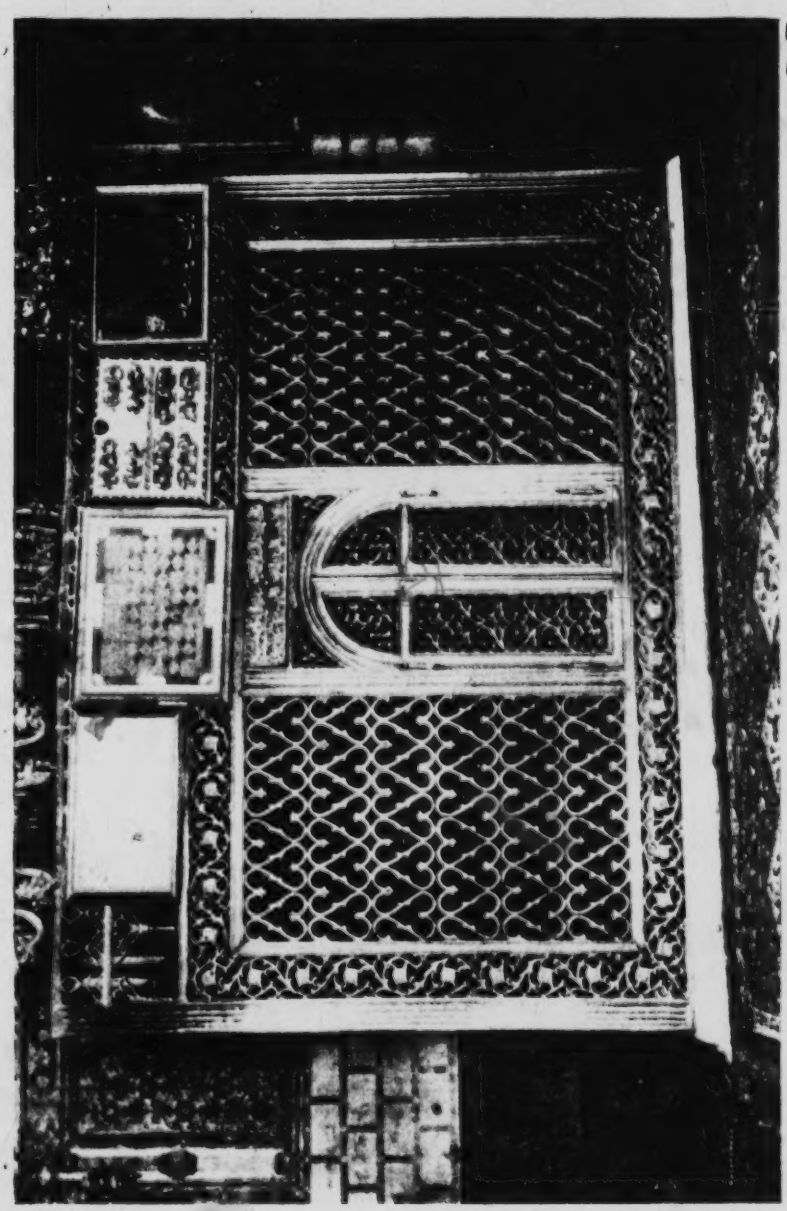

THE TOMB OF THE GRAND SANUSI (HASANAIN PASHA)

[facing P. 16]

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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poured its vitality southwards along the trade routes to the interior of Africa, into Fazzan and the various regions that are to-day called the French Sahara and French Equatorial Africa. Until France opened up the Atlantic seaboard, much of the Central African trade found its way along the oases-routes to the ports of Cyrenaica and Tripolitania and there were, therefore, well-established social connexions running from the Bedouin tribes of Cyrenaica and southern Tripolitania through the oases-dwellers to the tribes of the interior, for the nomads of Libya controlled the routes and to a large extent supplied the transport for the caravans. These connexions allowed an easy ingress to the Sanusiya. The two Cyrenaican tribes who chiefly traded with the Sahara, the Majabra and the Zuwaya of the oases of Jalu and al-Jikharra, had already been won over to the Order. The Zuwaya, who had date groves in the distant oasis archipelago of Kufra, over 700 km. to the south of Jaghbub, had already promised the Grand Sanusi a liberal donation of palms and water if he would build a zawiya there, and he had sent one of his followers to supervise the erection at al-Jauf of a lodge which became known as Zawiyat al-Ustad. Also, the Order had gained a foothold in the Wadai. While still a student at Mecca the Grand Sanusi had made friends with Muhammad Sharif, a prince of the Wadai, who in 1838 became Sultan of that country and furthered the interests of the Order there. It is said also that the Grand Sanusi bought a caravan of slaves on its way from the Wadai through Jaghbub to the coast and, having freed and educated them, sent them back to the Wadai as his missionaries.[1] The Order was also infiltrating from Mizda in southern Tripolitania, where a lodge was founded in 1845, and from the lodges in the oases of the Sirtican hinterland into Fazzan.

In Jaghbub oasis the Grand Sanusi set about the construction of his headquarters, a large mass of stone buildings, some of them two-storied, enclosing a mosque and school which were, for Cyrenaica, on an imposing scale. Around these central buildings and courts were the houses of the *Ikhwan*, many of them teachers in the school, of the students, of whom Shaikh Muhammad 'Uthman says that there were over 300,[2] and of the Sayyid's family. There were also guest-rooms, quarters for the

[1] Duveyrier, op. cit., pp. 18–19.

[2] Op. cit., p. 88.

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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slaves, kitchens, and wells. The oasis depression was studded with date palms and just outside the main entrance to the village were small irrigated gardens and wind-mills. The people had to use the brackish water for ordinary purposes, but sufficient fresh water for tea was obtained from infrequent showers by hollowing out cisterns in the rocks at the top of the western escarpment of the oasis.

The Grand Sanusi was not only a very learned man and a writer of distinction but also a bibliophile with a fine library of some 8,000 volumes,[1] mostly works on Islamic law and jurisprudence, mysticism, philosophy, history, koranic exegesis, poetry, and astronomy and astrology. Round him were many men capable of making good use of this substantial library. Indeed, it would have been difficult to have found anywhere in the Islamic world at that time, outside Cairo, a circle of better scholars. Poetry was one of the arts most cultivated at the oasis and I have been told by Arabs that it reached a high level of excellence. Shaikh Muhammad 'Uthman, himself a poet, wrote that at Jaghbub one meets 'literary men of distinction, whose writings eclipse those of the poets of Iraq and of Andalousia'.[2]

The whole community at Jaghbub may have numbered round about 1,000, but it is not possible to make more than a guess at the figure. As the oasis produces little except dates, the supply problem must have been considerable, and we know that the Grand Sanusi kept herds of camels to the west of the oasis, where there is scrub grazing, and at al-'Azziyyat, to transport supplies from the coast. The community lived very largely on the surplus revenues, mostly goods in kind, sent annually by all the zawiyas of Cyrenaica.

The community was centred round the University. It was, in fact, almost purely a University society, and its importance as such in the history of the Sanusiya Order is very considerable. Here, under his personal supervision and the supervision of his disciples, far from worldly distractions, the Grand Sanusi was able to train the future leaders of the Order. The Shaikhs of the lodges of the Order were appointed by him from among his intimate circle of disciples, many of whom had followed him

[1] Duveyrier, op. cit., p. 24; Muhammad bin 'Uthman, op. cit., p. 88; Sir Richard Burton, *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to al-Madinah and Meccah* (Memorial Edition), 1893, vol. ii, pp. 24–5.

[2] Op. cit., p. 88.

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from Algeria and the other countries of the Maghrib on his travels backwards and forwards to Arabia. He found in Cyrenaica a tribal structure of a simple kind on which it was possible to build a missionary organization, but not out of which it could be built. He brought this organization with him to Cyrenaica, a band of devoted followers whose allegiance had been tried by many vicissitudes. It must be remembered also that these intimates of the Grand Sanusi were foreigners to the Bedouin of Cyrenaica, with whom they had no ties of kinship, so that they stood always outside the tribal system and were not involved in the ancient loyalties and feuds inherent in Bedouin society. The missionary organization, the Sanusiya Order, was separate from the tribal system, and by centring it in the distant oasis of Jaghbub the Grand Sanusi prevented it from becoming identified with any one tribe or section of the country, as it might have become had it been centred in Cyrenaica proper. As we will see, it was the local attachment of the tribes to the zawiyas in their territories, and the attachment of the Shaikhs of these zawiyas to the Head of the Order, which made the Order so effective a missionary Body, and eventually enabled it to become a political force.

The Grand Sanusi died at Jaghbub on 7 September 1859 and was buried there. Later a magnificent shrine, furnished with ornate trappings, was erected over his bones and was surmounted with a white cupola, which gleams several miles away as one approaches the oasis. The shrine is of Egyptian craftmanship and seems incongruous in its desert surroundings and unfamiliar among a simple people.

There can be no gainsaying that al-Sayyid Muhammad bin Ali al-Sanusi was a great man and his life's work a great achievement. He is said to have been tall and of a distinguished appearance, an eloquent speaker, and a wise teacher.[1] His religious personality may be estimated by the fact that many Algerians, Tunisians, and Moroccans were so inspired by his teaching and example that they left their homes and followed him on his travels and at his orders went as missionaries into new lands, and by the fact that the Bedouin of Arabia and Libya, who are a reserved and unheeding people, accepted him as their guide in things both spiritual and temporal.

[1] Adams, op. cit., p. 10.

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The mere physical achievement of the man was remarkable. He had studied assiduously since he was a small boy in the Koranic school of his home and in other schools of North Africa and Arabia, and was still acquiring and sifting knowledge in his library at Jaghbub up to his death. He had taught in the schools in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Tripolitania, Cyrenaica, Egypt, the Hijaz, and the Yaman. Months of his life had been spent in travelling by the slow camel caravans of those days. He had thrice made the pilgrimage to Mecca. In spite of these activities he had found time to write a number of treatises. He had started his career as the head of a new missionary Order late in life—he was about 50 years of age when he founded his first zawiya in Arabia, and in the next twenty years he had made the Sanusiya the dominant Order in western Arabia and in North Africa from the Nile Valley to the borders of Tunisia and from the Mediterranean to the Sahara. When he died it was still intensifying its activities in the areas where it was already dominant, building everywhere new lodges, and was still expanding, mainly into the Sahara and the Sudan.

IV

When the Grand Sanusi died his two surviving sons, al-Sayyid Muhammad al-Mahdi and al-Sayyid Muhammad al-Sharif, were minors, so a regency of ten Shaikhs was appointed to control the affairs of the Order till the elder, Muhammad al-Mahdi, was old enough to take over their direction. When he did so he dealt primarily with the general affairs of the Order, leaving religious instruction in the hands of his brother.

The Grand Sanusi had been typical of the great itinerant teachers of his day: international in outlook and intent on the pursuit of holiness and learning rather than guided by secular distractions and ambitions. Mecca was the centre of his world and to it he tended always to gravitate. The Sayyid al-Mahdi was more definitely a Cyrenaican. Born in 1844 in a cave at Massa, near the Cyrenaican Mother Lodge of al-Baida, he was brought up among the religious families of the country and among the Bedouin. He studied under his father, the erudite Moroccan Sidi Ahmad al-Rifi, Sidi 'Ali bin 'abd al-Maula, Sidi 'Umran bin Baraka, and others of his father's circle of pupil-

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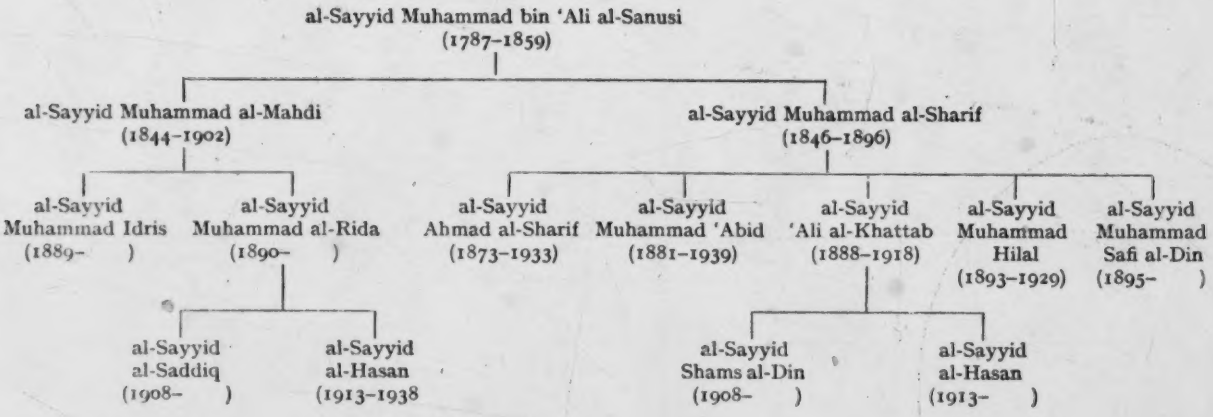

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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savants, and later at Mecca. He is said to have been an eloquent and inspiring leader and he was evidently an able organizer. Unlike his father the Grand Sanusi and his nephew Sayyid Ahmad al-Sharif he has left no writings behind and he seems to have had less interest than they in literature and speculation. He lived an austere life and was considered by his followers to have been a saint and worker of miracles as great, or greater, than his father.

The Order expanded considerably under Sayyid al-Mahdi's leadership, particularly into the Sahara and the Sudan, and its greatly extended missionary enterprises demanded his personal attention. The conversion of the heathen and semi-heathen tribes of these regions created political problems and the trading activities of the Order required organization. The trade routes through the Libyan oases to the coast had increased in importance since the rise of the Sudanese Mahdi in 1881 had closed the Nile route. Personal direction was difficult from Jaghbub, so in 1895 Sayyid al-Mahdi moved the seat of the Order to Kufra, a more central position than Jaghbub in the theocratic empire being slowly built up. He first went to live at the zawiya of al-Ustad but shortly afterwards built a new zawiya, in which he resided, on a site which became known as al-Taj. He departed from Jaghbub amid the lamentations of his followers, only some of whom he was able to take with him to Kufra, leaving the rest behind at Jaghbub, with his nephew al-Sayyid Muhammad 'Abid as his titular representative there.

There are few places in the world so remote as Kufra oasis, but it was at the centre of the Sanusi empire and the meeting-place of a number of important desert routes. Before Sayyid al-Mahdi made it the seat of his Order, Kufra had been little more than a watering place for caravans and the centre for the wandering Tibbu tribes of the region, though the Zuwaya of al-Jikharra went there each year to collect dates. It now became an emporium through which caravans were constantly passing and exchange was carried on. The Sanusiya profited both by directly engaging in trade and transport and through customs dues.

The little village of mud and palmwood houses at al-Taj also became a centre of religious life and propaganda. The missionary efforts of the Order intensified all over Fazzan and into

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the territories of Kawar, Tibesti, Borku, Ennedi, Darfur, Wadai, Kanem, Chad, the Azger, the Air, and Baghirmi. Its teachings were spread as far as Senegal. The work of organizing this propaganda fell largely to Sayyid al-Mahdi's two principal lieutenants. Sidi Muhammad al-Barrani operated in Kanem, where he founded a lodge at Bir Alali on the route to Chad and organized bands among the Aulad Suliman, Zuwaya, Majabra, Tibbu, and especially the Tuwariq, to oppose the advance of the French into Central Africa; and afterwards in the Borku. Muhammad al-Sunni, and his son al-Mahdi, operated in Bornu and Baghirmi, where he entered into relations, politically unfruitful, with the Sultans of those countries, and in the Wadai, where he strengthened the good relations existing between the Sultan of that country and Sayyid al-Mahdi. In 1899 Sayyid al-Mahdi transferred the seat of his Order to Qiru (or Quru) oasis, between Borku and Tibesti, to direct better its propaganda, to administer the extensive regions won to it, and to organize resistance to the French.

[114] It is sometimes said in European books that one reason why Sayyid al-Mahdi went from Jaghbub to Kufra was his desire to increase the distance between himself and the Turkish Administration of Cyrenaica, but I have not found any evidence to support this view. On the other hand there can be no doubt that he was alarmed by the military and political activities of the French, about which he seems to have been well informed. The French were hastening to reach the limits of the sphere allotted to them by the agreements with England of 1898 and 1899 about the partition of Central Africa. In January 1902 they seized Bir Alali (Kanem) and destroyed the Sanusiya zawiya there. At the end of May, or at the beginning of June, in the same year Sayyid al-Mahdi died. His brother, Sayyid Muhammad al-Sharif, had predeceased him at Jaghbub in 1896.

In general the energies of the Sayyid al-Mahdi had been directed to the Sahara and the Sudan and the main events during his headship of the Order took place off the Cyrenaican stage. I have not thought it necessary, therefore, to give more than a brief summary of his career and of the political history of the Order in Central Africa. He saw the Order his father had founded rise under his direction to the height of its expansion

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and political importance. Except for two or three lodges founded after his death the distribution of the lodges shown on the map—two in Algeria, and some elsewhere which were not completed, are not marked—is that of 1902. All the Bedouin of Cyrenaica and of the Sirtica, and most of those in the Western Desert of Egypt, followed the Order and there was no part of these regions which had not established in it a Sanusiya lodge; and even in the towns of Cyrenaica it had an influential following in the more cultured administrative and commercial circles. In southern Tripolitania the Order had slowly increased its authority and advanced it to the west, while it was the dominant power in Fazzan and in the central Sahara. It had retained a powerful following among the Bedouin of the Hijaz.

After Sayyid al-Mahdi's death the fortunes of the Order declined. This was chiefly due to the attack on it by the powers of Europe whose greed for possessions in Africa and Asia was bringing them rapidly to disaster. For his part Sayyid al-Mahdi showed himself anxious to avoid any action which might enable these powers to accuse him of political designs. He wished only to be left alone to worship God according to the teachings of his Prophet, and when in the end he fought the French it was in defence of the religious life as he understood it. In its remarkable diffusion in North and Central Africa the Order never once resorted to force to back its missionary labours. Shaikh Muhammad 'Uthman says of Sayyid al-Mahdi that the only orders he gave his followers were to pray and to obey God and His Prophet, that he avoided making any show of his power, considerable though it was, and that he held himself apart from political questions, fleeing from all considerations of that kind.[1] The Sanusiya Order co-operated with the Turks in the administration of Cyrenaica, although the Sanusi family and the Brothers of the Order disapproved of their way of life, but it resisted Turkish demands for assistance in their war of 1876–8 against the Russians. It refused the aid asked for by 'Arabi Pasha in Egypt in 1882, and by the Sudanese Mahdi in 1883, against the British. Sayyid al-Mahdi likewise rejected diplomatic overtures by the Italians and Germans. But when the French invaded its Saharan territories and destroyed its religious houses, and when later the Italians, also without

[1] Op. cit., pp. 118–19.

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provocation, did the same in Cyrenaica, the Order had no choice but to resist.

But though it was attacks from the outside which destroyed the theocratic empire of the Sanusiya, it may be considered doubtful whether in any case such extensive territories could have been maintained under single direction. The economic and political organization of the Order was crude, even when elaborated in the days of Sayyid al-Mahdi in response to increased trading activities and to the need of maintaining peace in the petty and barbarous states that had come under its influence. Its administrative machinery was at no time adequate for effective control over such wide domains, with their poor communications and their manifold tribal, racial, and cultural divergencies. To these weaknesses must be added, after Sayyid al-Mahdi's death, personal rivalries within the Sanusi family on the lines of which cracks began to appear in the loose empire, and it is probable that even if it had not been attacked by the Powers of Europe it would have broken up into a number of principalities, or spheres of religious influence, ruled by various members of the family. It might indeed be possible to sustain the thesis that it was the Italian occupation of Libya which prevented the complete break-up of the Order by rallying the outraged sentiment of the Bedouin to its side as the symbol of their common resistance to conquest and alien rule.

The administrative organization of the Order in the time of Sayyid al-Mahdi was simple indeed. Each lodge of the Order lived on its own revenues, derived from endowments, tithes, contributions of money, goods, transport, and labour, and sent its surplus to Jaghbub and Kufra for the maintenance of the University and of the Sanusi family and for the general purposes of the Order. The Shaikh of each lodge arbitrated in disputes in the district in which it was situated and could generally wield spiritual sanctions sufficiently weighty to compel acceptance of his awards. The Shaikh of a lodge was appointed by the head of the Order and was responsible to him. There was, however, so little centralized planning that new lodges seem occasionally to have been founded by the initiative of influential families without the head of the Order hearing of the new foundation till its completion. In the more distant parts

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the lodges were largely autonomous, or came under the control of a local Mother Lodge, such as Mizda in Tripolitania and Abu Qubais in Arabia. After the death of Sayyid al-Mahdi, a member of the Sanusi family sometimes installed himself as local director of the affairs of the Order, as Sayyid Muhammad 'Abid did in Fazzan. Without going into further detail it may be said that though central control existed it was cumbersome and that though there was an organization it was inadequate to deal with situations such as that which faced the Order on the death of Sayyid al-Mahdi, which demanded a rapid marshalling of its dispersed resources.

V

The dynastic situation which had formed after the death of the Grand Sanusi formed again after the death of Sayyid al-Mahdi: his surviving sons, Sayyid Muhammad Idris and Sayyid Muhammad al-Rida, were minors. The leadership of the Order therefore passed to Sayyid Ahmad al-Sharif, son of Sayyid Muhammad al-Sharif, Sayyid al-Mahdi's younger brother; though for the first few years its political direction seems to have been largely in the hands of the experienced old Shaikh Ahmad al-Rifi, the last of the intimates of the Grand Sanusi and the principal adviser of Sayyid al-Mahdi.

Sayyid Ahmad al-Sharif's leadership of the Order falls into three periods, from 1902 to 1912 when he was resisting the French in the Sahara, from 1912 to 1918 when he was in Cyrenaica directing the Bedouin against the Italians and the British, and from 1918, when he went into exile, to 1933, the year of his death at al-Madina in Arabia. It is only the second period with which this book is directly concerned and I will therefore summarize very briefly the events in the Sahara, leaving to a future chapter a more detailed account of the events in Libya which led to the Sayyid's appearance in Cyrenaica at the head of the Sanusiya Militant.

The French advance continued. After the loss of Bir Alali in 1902 Sayyid Ahmad moved his headquarters from Qiru back to Kufra, where he was protected by an immense desert and diplomatic immunity, since the British took the view that the oasis belonged to Turkey. In 1906 the French took Kawar and

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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Turkish Administration was centred in the towns but operated, as will be explained later, through the contacts of its local officials, who were generally Arabs of the country, with the leading tribal Shaikhs, with whom they made friends. These officials were townsmen or sons of Bedouin who had received an urban education and they acted as links between the citizen communities and the Bedouin. Through Bedouin relations with town merchants and officials what was happening in the world outside Cyrenaica percolated to the most distant tents. Another channel of political and cultural infiltration was the network of Sanusiya lodges. The Shaikh of the Sanusiya lodge at Banghazi was regarded as the ambassador of the head of the Order to the Governor of Cyrenaica and he was chosen for qualities which fitted him for this role. He was consulted by the Governor on matters in which the tribes were involved, and through him and the Brothers of the lodges of the towns news of the outside world reached the Head of the Order in the distant oasis of Kufra and the Heads of the local lodges, whose relations with the Bedouin in their localities were intimate. Thus, as will be seen, the Bedouin had a general idea of what the revolution of the 'Young Turks' meant and were aware of the impending crisis long before the Italian attack on their country was delivered. But though maintaining communications with the towns, neither the tribal Shaikhs nor the Sanusiya allowed themselves to be subordinated to them or identified themselves with urban interests. The Bedouin Shaikh did not, like the Syrian landowner, feel any need to have a town house, and the Sanusiya ever remained a country and Bedouin Order and directed its affairs from the desert.

Town and country kept apart, with the towns dependent on the country and not the country on the towns, because there was in Cyrenaica no client peasantry bound by debt, need of protection, and trade monopoly to the towns. The Bedouin did not settle on the land where they would be an easy prey to the usurer, overseer, and tax collector. Those who were defeated in the great tribal wars of the past and in the inter-tribal and inter-sectional fighting of more recent times migrated to Egypt and settled there as *fallahin*, and not in Cyrenaica. In Cyrenaica there is not the spur of adverse climatic conditions or the lash of land shortage to drive them to depart from their ancient

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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Arabian ways. In Egypt necessity has slowly subjugated the exiles to the peasant yoke. They long resisted but, like the Bedouin nomads coming from the Sinai Peninsula, had in the end to submit or perish. The absence of a substantial peasantry in Cyrenaica is one of the characteristics which most distinguish it from the Arab societies of Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Egypt, and the Maghrib. The peasant can be dominated. He is fixed to the earth and can be made to surrender it and till it for others. The Cyrenaican Bedouin is fixed to no place and cannot be forced to sell his birthright by bad seasons or intimidation. This has meant that there have not been in Cyrenaica any social enclaves attached to the towns through which the towns and administrative centres could lord it over the Bedouin. Outside the towns all is Bedouin and the Turkish Administration, and afterwards the Italian Administration, found that they could not get a grip on the Bedouin of Cyrenaica as they could on the peasantry of Tripolitania.

Nevertheless the towns and the Turkish, and later the Italian, Administration in them affected the tribal system by acting as a pull on those tribal segments which lived nearest to them, so that the tribes which lay between the towns and the steppe were attracted towards one or other of these poles. The political structure of Cyrenaica as a whole exercised in this way a significant influence on the segmentary tribal system.

IV

The Bedouin who became followers of the Sanusiya Order and whose country and way of life I have described are divided into tribes and tribal sections owning different tracts of the country. This tribal system existed in Cyrenaica long before the Grand Sanusi preached there and it continued to exist after his grandson Sayyid Muhammad Idris had fled the country and the Sanusiya Order had been abolished and its lodges destroyed by the Italians. It is the fundamental structure of Bedouin society which the Sulaimid tribes brought with them from Arabia.

The Bedouin of Cyrenaica are Arabs. The Arabian tribes who conquered the country and settled in it mixed with the indigenous Berbers, as is evident in their physical features to-

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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The figures for the free tribes include attached client groups, for the principal of which estimates are also given separately. The figures are taken from Col. De Agostini's monograph. The provenance of the chief Bedouin tribes of Tripolitania and of the fringes of Fazzan who are Sanusi, or sympathetic to the Sanusiya, is shown, likewise in relation to the distribution of Sanusiya lodges, on the map on page 52.

VI

Although there were in the past intertribal wars and feuds which have lasted into the present time, and in spite of the difference in status between free and client tribes, there were laws of the tents which gave every Bedouin the freedom of the whole country, and there was much coming and going between the tribes and exchange of hospitality, especially in the grazing grounds where sections with distinct territories on the plateau shared common pasturage to the south of it, and where the necessities of Bedouin life, watering at wells in transit, the crossing of another tribe's territory on the way to markets, the pursuit of straying camels, and the need to sow where rain fell, imposed a recognition of individual rights without regard to tribal affiliations or social status. Had it not been so, the Grand Sanusi could not have built on the tribal system his inclusive organization, for there would have been no foundations in culture, social structure, and sentiment, on which to build.

My inclinations as an anthropologist are to discuss at some length the tribal and kinship systems and the life of the tents, but I refrain from giving more than a bare outline of the tribal system, and I neglect altogether kinship and the life of the tents, because, however interesting detail about these matters might be to the ethnologist, a knowledge of them is, I think, unnecessary for an understanding of the development of the Sanusiya Order in Cyrenaica. I discuss the structure of the Cyrenaican tribe therefore only in so far as it is relevant to this general theme.[1]

Use of the term 'tribe' in Cyrenaica, even if it be restricted to the big free tribes, is always to some extent arbitrary for the political structure is highly segmentary. Nevertheless, though

[1] For a more general account see Savarese, op. cit., Pt. II, *passim*.

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CHAPTER III

THE SANUSIYA AND THE TRIBES

I

793 619 WHEN the Grand Sanusi came to preach in Cyrenaica he found the kind of society I have outlined: a congeries of tribes without law or effective government, for the Turks had little control over the interior, but with like values and habits and a community of life which crossed tribal boundaries. The Bedouin to [181] whom he preached were simple people living the austere and monotonous life of the tents, with that savage character which has been so often portrayed, but also with those noble qualities which have seldom failed to evoke admiration from those who have lived among them. They were profoundly ignorant about [179] the outside world and also—which is what touched the heart of [797] the Grand Sanusi—about the faith of their fathers, and to this matter I must now return, since the Sanusiya was a missionary Order and can only be understood as such.

771 [797] Though the Bedouin professed Islam before the Grand Sanusi influenced them by his teaching, they were almost totally ignorant of its doctrinal content, rites, or ritual and moral duties, and it is safe to assume that they did not obey its precepts. It is safe to assume this because even to-day, after a century of Sanusiya instruction, the Bedouin perform their religious duties in a very perfunctory way, if at all, and when Muslim law is at variance with tribal custom they follow tribal custom. In saying that they are lax, I do not suggest that they [186] are not very sincere, Muslims. They are proud of being Muslims and consider themselves greatly superior to Christians, while they are contemptuous of Jews. Nevertheless, though they would not belittle, the Cyrenaican Bedouin feel no embarrassment at neglecting, the duties obligatory on every Muslim. The Confession of Faith is known to all and implicitly accepted by all. It imposes no irksome restrictions or tiresome duties. [782] But they almost completely neglect—I speak of the more nomadic sections whom I know best, but it is probably true of most Cyrenaican Bedouin—their daily prayers, a duty which is

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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which often contrasts so strikingly with their poverty and rags and what Paolo Della Cella describes as their 'excessive and habitual filth'.[1]

It is important that it should be understood that the Bedouin of Cyrenaica were Muslim, at any rate by allegiance if not by instruction, before the Grand Sanusi propagated the faith among them, because otherwise it would be difficult to account for their ready acceptance of his guidance. He was not appealing to a pagan people to embrace Islam, but to a Muslim people to show in their lives the faith they professed. It was his achievement to have given their religion organized form and direction, and by so doing to have exercised a persistent and transformative influence on their morals; for if the Bedouin neglect religious duties to-day and are by peasant and urban standards ignorant, loud, and lawless, it can be imagined that they were troublesome indeed before the Grand Sanusi and Sayyid al-Mahdi had taught them something of the duties of their faith and had softened the harshness of their customs. That the Sanusiya made a big difference to their way of life cannot be doubted. Shaikh Muhammad 'Uthman tells us of the Bedouin of Cyrenaica that 'They are very good-natured and of a cheerful disposition. They have a profound reverence for the Shaikh Sidi al-Mahdi, and they fear God and His Prophet. One is in perfect security among them; a stranger, an explorer, has he even loads of gold or silver, has nothing to fear from them.' He also says, and for the same reason, that there were peace and security for caravans in the Wadai and in those parts of the Sahara where the Sanusiya was established; and he adds that Sayyid al-Mahdi had achieved these remarkable results by the exercise of spiritual authority only, and not by force, 'as an Amir or Sultan would have done'. As for the citizens of Banghazi, of whom the Tunisian traveller had a very poor opinion, he says that they were proud, inhospitable, and lazy, and would still have been plunged in ignorance and without a vestige of civilization or of religious education 'if the goodness of God had not sent them the Sanusiya fraternity, which contributed much to their moral regeneration'.[2] Even Italian authors have to admit that the Sanusiya did much for the people

[1] Op. cit., p. 109.
[2] Op. cit., pp. 52, 59, 62, and 116–17.

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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of Cyrenaica.[1] The Bedouin remember with gratitude, as I have often heard them declare, the moral and cultural benefits brought to them by the Order. If they have fallen from the low religious and literary standards to which the Sanusiya raised a fraction of them it is due to the virtual extinction of its teaching office during their long struggle with the Italians.

II

The Bedouin the Grand Sanusi found in Cyrenaica were not only Muslims but also inveterate devotees of saints, the *Marabtin* (sing. *Marabat*) or Marabouts, as they are called in European accounts of North Africa, and the Grand Sanusi was in the long tradition of these holy men. Therefore, although I have touched on the matter in Chapter I, I need not excuse myself for treating it again in its Cyrenaican context, for Bedouin attachment to the Sanusiya springs from their personal devotion to the Grand Sanusi and his family, and not the other way round, and the Grand Sanusi derived his sanctity, and thereby his power, from the fact that he was a Marabout. The Bedouin are familiar with saints and ignorant of Orders. To them the Grand Sanusi was a saint and wonderworker, and a man with *baraka*, an ample measure of God's grace which flowed through him to ordinary folk; but there was nothing extraordinary about him. They knew his kind of old. When he died his tomb became a shrine, the largest and richest in Cyrenaica it is true, but only one among very many, dating from the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad, through the Martyrs who were killed fighting for the faith in Cyrenaica, to the pious and learned men of yesterday and the day before. His successors, by their kinship with him, and in virtue of their spiritual legacy from him, became heirs to his *baraka*; and so, to a lesser degree, have the heirs of the other religious teachers who came to Cyrenaica from the west, who died and were buried there, and whose descendants are the *Marabtin bil baraka* lineages of to-day. The authority the Grand Sanusi had over the Bedouin of Arabia and North Africa can be parallelled by the careers of many holy

[1] Giuseppe Macaluso, *Turchi, Senussi e Italiani in Libia*, 1930, p. 32; Giglio, op. cit., p. 22; and Arcangelo Ghisleri (quoting Andrea Pedretti), *Tripolitania e Cirenaica dal Mediterraneo al Sahara*, 1912, p. 132.

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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men in North Africa whose families still retain much wealth and influence. It was this Marabout status of the Grand Sanusi in the eyes of the Bedouin which won him their respect: it was the organization of the Sanusiya Order, an organization the earlier Marabouts did not have, which enabled him to turn this respect into a theocracy.

There is more than one explanation of the origin of the word '*Marabat*'. That generally accepted is that it derives from the root RBT, to bind, and hence from '*ribat*', a fortified convent, inhabited by warrior-monks, found on the marches of Islam in its early days of expansion by arms. The word later became attached to the tribes which settled in Andalousia under the leadership of the Saharan tribe of the Sanhaja and was corrupted into the European 'Almoravides'. After the fall of the Sanhaja dynasty in the twelfth century part of the *Marabtin* tribes fell back into central and southern Morocco, whence many individuals moved eastwards. Some settled in Cyrenaica, generally on their return from the pilgrimage to Mecca, and their fanaticism, asceticism, ability to read and write, and thaumaturgic powers, impressed the simple Bedouin, who accepted them as holy men and magicians and used them to write charms, to perform religious rites, and to act as mediators in inter-tribal disputes. Sometimes, as we have seen, these men founded lineages which, dwelling under the shadow of their saintly forbears, became nuclei of social agglomerations which have developed in course of time into tribal groups, thus taking the shape of the tribal society in which they lived. The word '*Marabtin*' thus came to mean holy men (and their tombs) and then, in addition, tribes tracing their descent, or supposed descent, from these holy men and also, finally, in Cyrenaica, tribes who are clients of the great *Sa'adi* tribes which own the earth and water.

Some of the better known of the Cyrenaican saints, but by no means all, have gleaming white cupolas, supported by four walls, erected over their tombs, and inside the walls is a *tub*, a wooden box, over the grave, and this is covered with coloured cloth on which are inscribed passages from the Koran. Inside also are often a few pages from sacred books, occasionally a few small coins given by the local Bedouin, and any property, such as tents or ploughs, the Bedouin have wished to deposit in a

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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Marabouts of the kind I have described were still coming to Cyrenaica from the west up to the time when the Grand Sanusi began his preaching in the country. Two of them whom he found there, already living among the Bedouin, the one on the western and the other on the eastern part of the plateau, teaching them and settling their disputes, became his followers: Sidi Ahmad bin 'Abdalla al-Sakkuri, a late arrival from the west whose descendants became Shaikhs of the zawiya of al-Marj, and Sidi al-Martadi Farkash, of an old *Marabtin* family of Cyrenaica, whose descendants became Shaikhs of the lodges at Umm al-Rāzam, Bishara, and Martuba. But the great majority of the Grand Sanusi's helpers were men who had come with him from the west, chiefly from Algeria. Other *Ikhwan* families, mostly of the Khattabi lineage, of which the Sanusi family are a branch, came later, also from Algeria, in the time of Sayyid al-Mahdi. To the Bedouin they were all Marabouts and when they had in their lifetimes a reputation for piety or learning their tombs in the Sanusiya lodges in which they resided became places of cult like those of their forerunners all over Cyrenaica. But unlike the earlier Marabouts these Sanusiya Brothers were not only holy men. They were also members of a fraternity, of an organization. The Sanusiya Order was thus not only heir to the accumulated capital of the Marabouts, but was able to exploit it as a corporation. It incorporated a number of isolated cults into a single wider cult, fractionized, it is true, by tribal particularisms, but, all the same, brought under a common organization. Each lodge of the Order was a cult centre, but it was something more: it was part of a general cult directed through the lodges towards the Head of the Order. The tribes of Cyrenaica became through the Order linked from above in a common, if loose, organization under a single, sacred, Head. This was possible only because a tribal system already existed uniting the different tribes, in spite of their feuds and enmities, into a society which, though lacking political unity, rested on common sentiments, a common way of life, and a common lineage structure.

What gave stability to this new relationship between the Bedouin tribes and the Sanusiya Order, turning the sacred Head into a secular leader and the religious organization into a government, and changed a loose federation of tribes into a

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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nation, was common hostility to outside interference, an ingredient supplied in measured quantities by the Turks and copiously by the Italians.

III

The rudiments of Islam which the Grand Sanusi found in Cyrenaica made his teachings acceptable, delivered as they were without embellishments, to the Bedouin of the country, and the Marabout tradition which he also found there made him personally acceptable to them. His chief difficulty must have been the rivalries between tribe and tribe and between tribal section and tribal section down to the smallest sections. This difficulty was overcome by transferring the centre of the Order to desert oases, where it could not become identified with any particular tribe, and by distributing its lodges impartially throughout the tribal territories.

Of the forty-five zawiyas belonging to the tribes of Cyrenaica proper (including al-Naufiliya and excluding the Kufra lodges) probably twenty-one were founded before 1860 or during the lifetime of the Grand Sanusi, twenty-two during the lifetime of Sayyid al-Mahdi, and two when Sayyid Ahmad al-Sharif was Head of the Order.

A high proportion of the lodges of the Order in the time of the Grand Sanusi were along the line of oases on the 29th parallel, for to the lodges of the Cyrenaican oases on that line must be added those in the oases of the Sirtica, Zalla, Saukna, Hun, and Waddan, all founded round about 1855, and probably that in al-Fuqha also. Lodges were early planted in the oases partly on account of their importance as caravanserai and trading centres, partly because the oases-folk were more tractable than the Bedouin, and partly because the stability of these centres gave greater opportunity for corporate religious life. The Sanusiya certainly made a deeper religious impression on the peoples of the oases than on the Bedouin.

It will have been noticed also how few of the Sanusiya lodges were founded in the towns of North Africa. There are no lodges in the towns of Egypt and though the Order counts many followers in the towns of Cyrenaica and is politically dominant in them it has only one zawiya in each, Banghazi, Darna, and al-Marj; and that at Banghazi, the capital of the country, was

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tribe. In the oasis of Jalu, where there was not the same tribal solidarity as in the neighbouring oases of Aujila and al-Jikharra, the two lodges were almost next door to each other. This was because the oasis was split into two opposed villages, each occupying about half of it with a strip of waste ground in between. A similar lack of unity in the Egyptian oasis of Siwa accounts for the building of several Sanusiya lodges there.

IV

Starting from the foundation of al-Zawiya al-Baida in 1843 the Order spread itself throughout Cyrenaica until it embraced in its network of lodges the entire tribal system of the country. It seeded itself, as it were, in the crevasses between tribes and between tribal sections, and its points of growth were thus also the points of convergence in tribal and lineage structure.

A tribal zawiya seems generally to have been founded in the following manner. A tribe or tribal section saw with envy that a neighbouring tribe or section had a zawiya. They sent a deputation to the Head of the Order and asked him for a Shaikh to teach their children, cater for their religious needs, settle their disputes, and so forth. The Head of the Order granted them their request and sent them a Shaikh chosen from among the learned and pious men who surrounded him at Jaghbub. The Shaikh probably took with him one or two companions, *Ikhwan*, Brothers of the Order, to help him start the new lodge which the tribesmen built in the most favoured spot in their territory. Simple structures though these zawiyas were, they took many years to complete, being added to when further accommodation was required, in the leisurely Arab way. Most of them were built on Graeco-Roman foundations so that the tribesmen who constructed them found stone ready to hand.

Through the kindness of Shaikh Muhammad al-Tayyib al-Ashhab I have seen the letter sent in 1855 by al-Sayyid Muhammad Ibn 'Ali al-Sanusi al-Khattabi al-Hasani al-Idrisi to his virtuous sons, some of the Shaikhs of the Sdaidi section of the 'Awaqir tribe, about the building of the zawiya of Msus. He says that he is sending to them Brothers to construct the buildings and that he has instructed them to build an annex which he can use as a resthouse when he visits the zawiya, though this

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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is not to be built till the zawiya is completed. There will be builders and carpenters among the Brothers and all that is required of the tribal Shaikhs is selection of the site and supervision of the work. He points out to them that the work is for their benefit, in that they and their sons will receive in the zawiya an education, especially in the Koran and in the laws of Islam, and will be able to worship there. The Grand Sanusi then cites passages from the Koran and the *Hadith* commending religious benefactions. Finally he prays God to assist those engaged in the building and those who have made themselves responsible for the upkeep of the zawiya. God helps those who help others. A man reaps what he sows.

Some of the Cyrenaican lodges were larger than others but they all had the same features, a straggling warren of stone buildings comprising a mosque, schoolrooms, guest-rooms, apartments for the Shaikh of the zawiya and his family, rooms for teachers and pupils, and houses for the Brothers, clients, and servants, and their families. Many had small gardens nearby and the local cemetery was usually adjacent to a lodge. Jaghbub, where several hundred persons lived, was the largest of such communities. The ruins of Dariyana and al-'Azziyyat are also extensive and must have housed several hundred persons, but the average lodge probably housed only some fifty to a hundred persons, including wives and children, though there were often *Marabtin* families attached to the zawiya living nearby, sometimes in caves dating from classical times. The importance of a lodge was not to be estimated so much by the number of its occupants as by its tribal position and the number of its Bedouin adherents.

The Shaikh of a new zawiya would point out to the local tribesmen that he and his companions had no means of supporting themselves or of maintaining the zawiya. The various sections nearby then gave to the lodge the lands adjoining it, this estate surrounding a lodge being known as its *haram*. On the plateau the lodges were generously endowed with arable, in the steppe with wells, and in the oases with date-palms and springs. Later, further gifts of arable, wells, springs, and date-palms, or part use of these, would sometimes be made, especially when there was a dispute between two sections about ownership of property and neither would give way to the other,

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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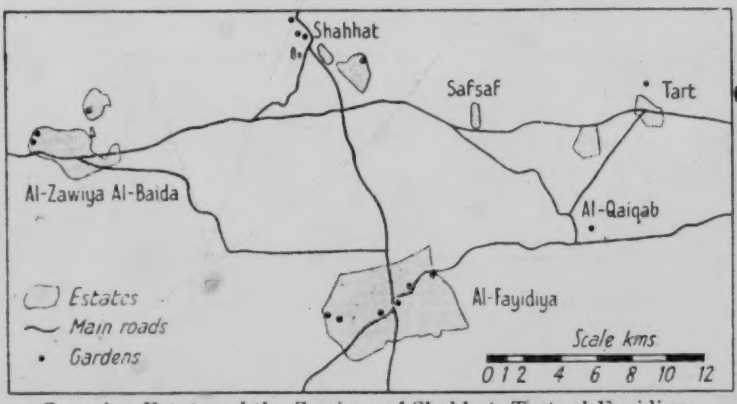
for they might then settle the matter by surrendering their claims to the zawiya.[1] Another way in which a lodge obtained rights in land was by asking permission of its owners to sow it. Constant repetition of this favour eventually gave the zawiya rights of use in it in perpetuity.

The tribesmen also assisted the Shaikh of the lodge in the cultivation of the lands, though most of the work was done by



Sanusiya Estates of the Zawiyas of Shahhat, Tart, al-Fayidiya, and al-Zawiya al-Baida.

the zawiya community itself. At sowing time the Shaikh would pitch his tent near the area to be cultivated and prepare a communal meal, taking with him some sacks of rice for the purpose. The local Bedouin then came with their draught animals and sowed and ploughed for a couple of days on behalf of the zawiya. The same procedure took place at harvest time. Besides gifts of land and voluntary service in cultivating, the Bedouin were expected to pay a tithe to the lodge at harvest time and after lambing. No doubt many of them paid annual dues but it is unlikely that any strict record was kept or that payment could have been enforced had they been averse to making it.

That it was expected that the Bedouin might promise services more readily than perform them is suggested by an interesting document, dated 1307 A.H., found by the Italians at the

[1] Savarese, op. cit., p. 193.

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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*175 *795 794 Taukra zawiya and given in an Italian translation by Judge Colucci.[1] In it the tribal sections of the Baraghtha, Tursh, Dinal, and Shilmani place themselves under obligation, through the signatories to the deed, to pay the zawiya of Taukra alms on flocks and crops, to supply camels to carry supplies to Jaghbub, and to help the zawiya in sowing, building, excavations, and other works. Subject to the penalty of paying double alms they will not, without the permission of the Shaikh of the zawiya, render like services to other zawiyas. They promise also to defend the zawiya and to respect those who live in it, or who are its guests, and agree that those who fail to do so may be punished in body or in estate. Each will be for the zawiya and the zawiya for each. God is greater than any man. Those who are obedient will be recompensed by Him. Peace be to those who follow the right path.

*795 423 The estates of the Sanusiya Order were *waqf* (called in Cyrenaica *habus*), inalienable endowments made in love of God by tribal sections and sometimes by individuals. They belonged to the various lodges to which they were donated, with the Order as a whole as residuary, and not to the family of the Grand Sanusi or to the Shaikhs of the lodges.[2] It was understood that when Bedouin donated tracts of country round a lodge they could continue to pasture and sow on any land not being used by the resident Brothers and to use the wells when there was sufficient water in them. The Shaikh of a zawiya was [993] the legal administrator of its properties. The Head of the Order had no direct say in the administration of the estates, and in all probability only knew roughly of their extent. The revenues of [434] one lodge could not be used for the upkeep of another, but any surplus over the expenses of a lodge were paid into a central pool. The members of the Sanusi family and the teachers and *795 794 administrative officials of the Order lived in the distant oases of Jaghbub and Kufra, which produced little but dates, and had to be supplied from the lodges of the coastal region. Supplies were sent by caravan partly in local produce, such as skins, wool, grain, butter, honey, and meat, and partly in money or [431] imported goods: rice, tea, sugar, and cloth. These gifts were

[1] Op. cit., pp. 434–5.

[2] Fernando Valenzi, 'La Senussia in Cirenaica ed il suo Patrimonio', *Rivista delle Colonie Italiane*, 1932, pp. 432–3.

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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opportunity to worship in a mosque, and that by charity to their lodges they might earn recompense hereafter.

Each lodge had its Shaikh, who represented the Head of the Order. He arbitrated between the Bedouin, led the tribesmen to holy war, acted as intermediary between the tribe or section and the Turkish administration, dispensed hospitality to travellers, supervised the collection of tithe, directed cultivation of grain and care of stock, dispatched surplus revenues to the Headquarters of the Order, acted as prayer-leader on Fridays, and assisted in preaching and teaching. There were besides a number of other functionaries among the Brothers: the Shaikh's deputy, the *imam* to lead the daily prayers and to teach the Koran and canon law, the *mu'allim* to teach reading, writing, and arithmetic in the zawiya school, and perhaps a special *muadhdhin* to call the faithful to prayer, though any of the Brothers could do that.

V

In principle, as we have noted, the lands attached to lodges belonged, like the lodges themselves, to the Order, and more particularly to the lodge to which they were donated, and not to any particular individual or family. In practice certain Shaikhly families tended to gain an hereditary interest in them. What happened in the early days of the Order was that a Shaikh was sent by its Head to found a lodge and when it was established he was translated to a fresh missionary field. Shaikhs of lodges were in this way moved fairly frequently at first, but it later became the practice to leave a Shaikh in charge till his death and then to nominate his successor from among his kinsmen, with the approval of the tribe and on the advice of Shaikhs of neighbouring lodges. What mostly seems to have happened was that the tribal sections concerned asked for a son or brother of the last Shaikh to be appointed director of their lodge and the Head of the Order confirmed their choice. As one Darsi tribesman put it: 'The Shaikh of our zawiya must be a man favoured by the hearts of the people.' In course of time the tendency for the Shaikhship of a lodge to be regarded as hereditary became very marked, it being understood that if there was a suitable candidate from the family already established in the lodge he would be appointed, a view with which the later Heads of the

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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Order concurred. Thus we find charge of a zawiya continuing in the hands of a single family to the point at which Muhammad Yahiya bin al-Sanusi bin 'Umar al-Ashhab was appointed by Sayyid Ahmad al-Sharif to succeed his father as Shaikh of Msus at the age of sixteen. Some of these families sent their roots so deep that not only did they obtain what amounted to hereditary rights to a particular lodge, but controlled several lodges. Such were the influential families of Ghumari, Kalili, Farkash, and Ashhab, and the Khattabi families.

Hence we find to-day that many of the lodges are in hereditary charge of a family of Shaikhs who consider that they have a pre-emptive claim to its directorship and to enjoyment of its revenues, a claim backed by tribal opinion and by the acquiescence of the present Head of the Order. Thus the Dardafi family may be said to own the Shahhat lodge, the Isma'ili family to own the Fayidiya lodge, the 'Ammur family to own the Qafanta lodge, and so on. So much is this the case that disputes now sometimes arise, as in 1942 at Qafanta and Mirad Mas'ud, between members of a family about which of its members should succeed to the directorship of a lodge and control of its revenues.

This development is not surprising. Poor communications and the troubled times since 1911 have encouraged local autonomy in the Sanusiya organization. The Shaikh of a lodge brought up his family in it and his sons had no other home than the lodge and no other friends than the Bedouin around it and the families of Shaikhs in nearby lodges. Tribesmen dislike change and prefer to have for the Shaikhs of their lodges members of families they know and who share their local interests. But the tendency towards hereditary succession is also related to the fundamental lineage structure of the tribes among whom the lodges are distributed, for it is noticeable that whereas hereditary succession became customary in the Bedouin, or tribal, lodges, it has been by comparison lacking in the urban lodges of Banghazi and Darna and in those oases where tribal structure has become obscured by village life. This would seem to suggest that *Ikhwan* families tend the more easily to become stabilized as lines of hereditary Shaikhs the more closely they are associated with tribal structure. It is precisely in the most powerful, numerous, and integrated tribal sections that we

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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find hereditary transmission of Shaikhship of lodges most accentuated, such as the Bara'asa-Tamia section (al-Zawiya al-Baida), the 'Awaqir-Sdaidi section (Msus zawiya), and the 'Abaidat-Ghaith section (Tart zawiya). In the same way the earlier Marabouts became, as has been noted, founders of lineages which were on the pattern of the branches of the Bedouin clans among whom they lived, and attached to them.

Also it must be remembered that the lodges were tribal institutions built by the local Bedouin so that they might participate in the *baraka* of Sayyid Muhammad bin 'Ali al-Sanusi. They participated in it through the Shaikhs of their zawiyas who received their *baraka* direct from the hands of the Grand Sanusi himself, or from the hands of son Sayyid al-Mahdi, and passed it on to their sons. This *baraka* belonged to the tribe, or tribal section, which built a lodge just as the *shaukha*, the secular Shaikhship of the tribe, or tribal section, belonged to it and had to be kept in it. In both the continuity of family succession had to be maintained, unless there were good reasons for acting otherwise. Thus each tribal section emphasized its autonomy in its hereditary line of religious Shaikhs, through whom the *baraka* of the founder of the Order was transmitted to them, whilst proclaiming its membership of a tribal federation with common allegiance to the Head of the Order.

As I have pointed out when speaking of the sacred *Marabtin* tribes of Cyrenaica, it was customary for the descendants of a Marabout to reside near his tomb. I have further mentioned that the Shaikh of a Sanusiya lodge, who is also called a *Marabat* by the Bedouin, might, if he had during life a reputation for piety, rather easily gained in Islam, be venerated as a saint when he was dead and his tomb become a shrine. This is another reason why Shaikhly families have tended to become hereditary directors of lodges.

Just as almost all the Marabouts of Cyrenaica were foreigners from the west, so were almost all the Shaikhs of the Sanusiya lodges. The Dardafi and Isma'ili families came from Tripolitania, the Ghumari family from Morocco, the 'Ammur, Bu Jibali, and Khattab families came from Algeria, and so on. As a class they enjoyed, and still enjoy, a reputation for sanctity among the Bedouin on account of their knowledge of the Koran

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and of reading and writing, and of their strict performance of religious duties. This reputation was doubtless enhanced by their foreign origin, for the Bedouin of Cyrenaica were accustomed to look to the west for piety.

At one time many, perhaps all, the Shaikhs of lodges were fairly well educated in such subjects as theology, canon law, and commentaries on sacred texts. To-day most of these alumni of Jaghbub University are dead and their successors, brought up in the bitter years since 1911, are for the most part very ignorant, some being almost as illiterate as the Bedouin themselves. The Bedouin regard them with a curious mixture of respect and condescension. They look up to them as learned and pious men who possess *baraka*, they kiss their hands, they call them '*Sidi*', and they listen respectfully to their admonishments and arbitraments. At the same time they look down on them for not being tribesmen and Bedouin, children of the tents. The Bedouin harmonize these conflicting attitudes by saying that a *Marabat* is a different kind of person from a Bedouin and cannot be expected to behave in the same way or to have the same outlook. He has been brought up to read books, pray, wash, and to do other things the Bedouin finds unnecessary in his own life. He has not been reared in the roving life of the tents nor learned the shepherd's art. Since they regard the *Ikhwan* as a different kind of people, the Bedouin do not intermarry with them nor with the Sanusi family, who belong to the same category. The *Ikhwan* families marry among themselves. The Sanusi family marry the daughters of *Ikhwan*, but do not give their daughters to persons outside their own kin.

The importance of the *Ikhwan* families in the history of the development of the Sanusiya is evidently very great. From the foundation of al-Zawiya al-Baida in 1843 to the appearance of Sayyid Ahmad al-Sharif in Cyrenaica in 1912 the Heads of the Order were absent from the country, either in Arabia or in distant oases, and its direct influence on the tribes was exercised by the Shaikhs of its lodges in their midst. Their ritual position within the tribal system combined with their structural position outside it enabled them to settle disputes and to unite and lead the various sections which had sponsored their lodges when the Order required their support. It was they who roused the

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which have a Maghribi origin and those which were founded in Iraq. Egyptian Orders are not represented in Cyrenaica. These facts are explained when it is pointed out that the Orders found in Cyrenaica to-day were introduced by urban immigrants from the west who settled in Banghazi and Darna as traders and artisans. Whence follows the most important feature of the non-Sanusiya Orders, their urban character. With the exception of the Madaniya and a single lodge of the 'Arusiya, these Orders are represented only in the towns. Occasionally one of their lodges was built with aid from local tribesmen, as the 'Arusiya lodges at al-Marj and Tubruq, but such examples are rare and in no way invalidate the statement that the Sanusiya alone has considerable following among the Bedouin. The adherents of the single 'Arusiya lodge at Bu Zaid are Bedouin of the Aulad al-Shaikh, immigrants from Tripolitania who regard themselves as direct descendants of Sidi 'Abd al-Salam, the founder of the Order whose rite they follow. The only competitor of the Sanusiya among the Bedouin was the Madaniya, which still retains its hold on the Fawakhir of the *barqa*, a tribe ill disposed towards any authority, and a few *Marabtin* fragments elsewhere, though these Bedouin now follow Sanusiya leadership in other than purely religious matters. There was at one time tension between the two Orders, complicated by tribal rivalries in the *barqa*, but it has now been for the greater part resolved. Apart from the opposition of the Sanusiya, the loss of influence of the Madaniya was hastened by its too close attachment to the fortunes of the declining Ottoman Caliphate, dissensions between the descendants of its founder, and a split in the Order itself.

The Sanusiya has always shown marked tolerance towards other Orders and it must, moreover, be noted that there are no doctrinal differences between the Orders, that members of different Orders worship together in the same mosques, and that sometimes a man is a member of several orders at the same time. We have seen that the Grand Sanusi in his early period joined a number of different Orders and our Tunisian friend Shaikh Muhammad 'Uthman seems to have made a hobby of joining them.[1] Furthermore, the founders of all the Orders are revered as saints by the common people everywhere, regardless

[1] Op. cit., pp. 64–6 and 251.

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tion were compelled to pay taxes and furnish supplies, and how forty-five of the Shaikhs of the Jawazi tribe were treacherously murdered and many of their followers massacred.[1] Generally, however, it may be said that Cyrenaica has no history, other than Bedouin traditions of inter-tribal wars, from 1051 to 1835, in which year the Turks regained control of Libya from the Caramanlis. On their return they instituted a more systematic administration than had been exercised during their earlier occupation.

The Turks returned to Cyrenaica about the time the Grand Sanusi first visited the country and eight years after their reoccupation he founded his first zawiya on the plateau. As the Sanusiya Order gained the confidence of the Bedouin and became accepted as their spokesmen, it was necessary for the Ottoman authorities to take it into consideration in their dealings with the tribes of the interior. The Order made it possible for the different tribes to express themselves politically as a unit for the first time in their relations with the outside world. The tribes provided the Order with a social system, and the Order gave to that system a political organization at a time when it was beginning to be brought into more direct contact with political forces outside tribal society.

The Sanusiya is known to have been given a Charter about 1856 by Sultan 'Abd al-Majid I. His firman was brought from Istanbul by Sidi 'Abd al-Rahim al-Maghbub, later Shaikh of the Sanusiya zawiya at Banghazi, who had been sent to Istanbul for the purpose and had the utmost difficulty, as was often the case with visitors to the Ottoman capital, in obtaining an audience with the Sultan. Whatever other privileges the firman conferred on the Order—I have not seen the document—it certainly exempted its properties from taxation and permitted it to collect a religious tithe from its followers. A second firman was issued later by Sultan 'Abd al-Majid's brother, Sultan 'Abd al-'Aziz, and was brought from Istanbul to the Governor of Tripoli by Sidi Abu al-Qasim al-'Isawi, 'Abd al-Rahim's successor in the Banghazi lodge. There is in the Land Registry at Banghazi a letter from the Governor of Tripoli to the Governor of Banghazi giving the essence of this firman. It confirms the privileges granted by the earlier firman and adds to them that

[1] Op. cit., *passim* and p. 220 seq.

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The local Turkish officials were content for the most part to sit in the towns, many of them no doubt regretting that they had ever been sent to Cyrenaica, where their salaries were low and often in arrears, and to let the Sanusiya control the interior so long as taxes were paid and no overt act was committed against the Sultan's authority which might bring them to the notice of the Court; and the Central Government for its part was quite prepared to forget that Cyrenaica formed part of the Sultan's dominions so long as there was peace there and it sent annual tribute to Istanbul. The Turks were indifferent otherwise to what happened in Libya, which was a poor province, particularly the Cyrenaican part of it, where their administration was even less efficient than in Tripolitania, where it was happy-go-lucky enough. They had quite enough troubles elsewhere without alienating to no purpose a powerful Islamic Order and the warlike Bedouin who supported it. They therefore left the Sanusiya to perform many of the functions of government in the interior—education, justice, the maintenance of security, and even to some extent the collection of taxes, though in the matter of tribute there were difficulties, for Bedouin do not willingly pay taxes to anyone, and since they already paid a tithe to the Sanusiya, with a grace which contrasted with their reluctance to pay taxes to the Turkish Administration, they were disinclined to pay twice. When any question arose which required direct contact between the Head of the Order and the local Governor it was established through the Shaikh of the lodge at Banghazi, or a special messenger was sent from Jaghbub or Kufra to the Turkish Governor at Banghazi, or he sent a messenger to the Head of the Order in his oasis seat. From time to time the Central Government sent an envoy to the Head of the Order with gifts and instructions to report on what was going on in the Sahara, and on such occasions he was received handsomely and returned with the blessings of the *Shaikh al-Tariqa* on the Sultan. Sometimes, as we have seen, the Head of the Order sent a deputation to Istanbul.

The payment of taxes and the maintenance of peace and communications, the only two functions of government the Turkish officials bothered their heads about, were intimately connected. Minor quarrels among the Bedouin themselves little interested them, but armed resistance to taxation was certain to earn

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Arabs, to assess and collect taxes, to maintain security, and to control the few police allotted to them. In this task they expected co-operation from the local Shaikhs of the tribal sections and the Shaikhs of the Sanusiya lodges.

It is remarkable that the Bedouin paid any taxes at all, for the mudirs had not sufficient force at their command, nor had the Governor at Banghazi, to compel the Bedouin to pay if they were determined not to do so. The mudir of Slanta had only 50 to 60 soldiers in his sub-district and the Bara'asa whom he administered could have annihilated this force with ease, as could the 'Awaqir the 50 soldiers and the handful of police stationed at Suluq. That taxes were collected at all, and all the more that they were collected without constant disturbance, is to be accounted for partly by the recognition by the Shaikhs of the tribal sections, with whom the mudirs were careful to keep on good personal terms, that there was a moral obligation to pay them; but there were also sanctions if they were not paid. If the Shaikh of a tribal section did not collect the taxes due from that section, he was held responsible and action could be taken against him personally. The mudir, accompanied by a small armed force, went a round of the tribal sections attached to his sub-district each year, generally in springtime, and sent out other tax-collecting parties in other directions. Sometimes special tax commissions appointed by the Governor also toured the country. A favourite device was for such parties to quarter themselves in the camp of a recalcitrant Shaikh and to reside there as his guests, for the soldiers and police carried few provisions, till the tax was paid. The Shaikhs, on the other hand, were made partners in the undertaking by, besides investment with an official robe and status, receiving a percentage of the taxes collected, the mudir himself also taking a percentage. Moreover, each Shaikh whose section paid the tax was determined that the other sections should not escape paying as well. A Shaikh was able to divide up the assessment on his section among the minor Shaikhs, and the minor Shaikhs among yet smaller ones. It was in the interest of each Shaikh to see that the smaller ones did not escape their share and leave him with the responsibility for a deficit. Responsibility was in this way passed down the tribal structure. On the whole the system worked well and the Turkish officials and the Bedouin did not

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get on badly together. Each understood the other. Also there was much elasticity in the taxes which appealed to the Bedouin, who prefer to pay a heavy tax one year and lightly or not at all another year, rather than to pay a regular and inevitable tax. The assessments were seldom revised and often had little relation to the capacity of a tribal section to pay. The result was that taxes were always in arrears and in some years, or for some sections, remitted altogether. Those sections nearest the Turkish posts paid the more easily because they were the more vulnerable. Some of the more nomadic Bedouin escaped payment altogether, or at any rate for years at a stretch. It is, I think, safe to assume that the taxes actually collected over a number of years were light. Otherwise the Bedouin would not have paid them.

Perhaps the chief reason why taxes were collected without constant rebellion was the support given to the administration in this matter by the Sanusiya. The Turks held the coastal towns and a few inland posts outside which their direct control of the country was restricted to those Bedouin who lived a fairly stable life in the immediate vicinity of these centres. The rest of the country was left to the Sanusiya and its own devices, though, as we have seen, the Turks sent occasional patrols into the interior. Sporadically, without much enthusiasm or perseverance, the Administration at one time tried to extend its effective control into the hinterland by nominating to official posts, and giving arms and money to, selected tribal chiefs, such as the Shaikhly families of Hadduth, Lataiwish, and Saif al-Nasir. Bu Bakr bin Hadduth of the Bara'asa was made *qaimaqam* of al-Qaiqab, where he had a castle; 'Ali Lataiwish of the Magharba was made *qaimaqam* of Sirt, where he, also, had a castle; and the fierce old warrior chieftain of the Aulad Suliman, Saif al-Nasir, was made mudir of Bu Njaim. This procedure resulted in brigandage rather than in good administration and was in the main discarded. Instead the mudirs worked directly through the Shaikhs of the tribal sections and, especially when dealing with intertribal and intersectional affairs, through the Shaikhs of the Sanusiya zawiyas. Some of the older notables of Banghazi have told me that the Pasha, as the Governor was often called, would never have succeeded in collecting taxes among the Bedouin had it not been for the co-operation of the

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Heads of the Sanusiya lodges, who often accompanied the mudirs and tax commissions to the Shaikhs of the tribal sections attached to their lodges. It was to the common interest of the Turkish Administration and of the Sanusiya that there should be order, security, justice, and trade in the country, and they co-operated to maintain them.

The Turkish officials did their utmost to remain on good terms with the Sanusiya Shaikhs and to this end, and doubtless also because they found no difficulty in accepting, as educated men, its exalted teachings, some of them affiliated themselves to the Order. Membership of it gave them prestige in the eyes of the Bedouin as great, if not greater, than their official status gave them. Likewise the more prosperous merchants who had dealings with the Bedouin tribes or sent caravans to the Sahara and Sudan found it advisable to be received into the Order. It is for this reason that in all the towns of Libya we find a small body of the richer and more cultured citizens ascribed to the Order, while the common people belong to other or no Orders.[1]

But though the administration of Cyrenaica might be called at this period a Turco-Sanusi condominium there was an undercurrent of jealousy on both sides which occasionally gave rise to open conflict. A sure occasion was any effort on the part of the Administration to tax the Sanusiya estates. Although these had been exempted from taxation by the Sultan's firman, the local administration made rare and unsuccessful efforts to exact taxation on them. When in 1908 they tried to tax the crops of the Sanusiya holdings a tribal meeting, attended by 150 Shaikhs headed by 'Umar bu Rqaia of the Darsa tribe, met at the zawiya of al-Haniya and decided not to pay any more tribute to the Turkish Government till it revoked the tax. The Government then dropped the matter, though the trouble continued till 1910. Earlier, the Governor Ahmad Pasha Zuhadi (1904–5), acting on instructions from Istanbul, had tried to impose a tax on the crops of tribesmen and zawiyas alike. The Bedouin round al-Marj had thereupon attacked a Turkish detachment charged with collecting the tax and sent them back to Banghazi stripped of everything they possessed. The outcome was that the Governor was relieved of his office.

[1] Capt. Emilio Canevari, *Zauie ed Ichuan Senussiti della Tripolitania*, 1917, *passim*.

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mon symbol which stood for their common interests. Faced with amorphous, but seemingly ineradicable, opposition from the Bedouin the Italians more and more directed their hostility to the Sanusiya Order as a tangible head to the resistance which could be destroyed. Failing to crush opposition they were forced to come to terms with it, but they could not come to terms with a tribal system—only with an organization and through a person, the Head of the Order, who could speak for that organization and for the tribes which it represented. Both in fighting the tribes and in trying to come to terms with them, the Italians thus threw the Sanusiya organization into political relief, and the *tariqa*, the religious Order, began to speak of itself as a *hakuma*, government. The peace negotiations, therefore, centred round a contradiction. The Italians attempted to exact recognition of sovereignty and this implied recognition of the right of the Head of the Order to surrender sovereignty, which he could do only if he were in a position analogous to that of the Head of the Italian State, a status the Italians would not concede. Nevertheless they were compelled, in order to establish relations with the tribes, to grant the Head of the Order the title of Amir, and implicitly to recognize him as not only the Shaikh of a religious Order, but the Head of a political organization. As will be seen, the dilemma led to much equivocation and finally to a second Italo-Sanusi war. In this second war the Sanusiya was entirely destroyed as an organization, political, economic, and religious. It persisted nevertheless as a sentiment, and the Head of the Order in exile in Egypt still retained the allegiance of the Bedouin who saw in his freedom the hope of their own.

When the last European war broke out and Cyrenaica became a battlefield of first importance it was in the interests of each side to ensure that the local population would be favourable to it. The Italians, having destroyed the Order, the one organization through which they might have made effective propaganda among the Bedouin, were confronted in the country with an unimpressionable mass of sullen resentment which could in no way be influenced to their advantage. The British, on the other hand, who sought to rouse the Bedouin to renewed rebellion, at any rate up to the point at which they gave what assistance to British arms they were capable of, had a ready

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*175 *648 *795 • 793 554 means of influencing them to this end in the exiled Head of the Order and many influential Shaikhs of tribes who recognized his authority. But the British Government, which in the past had consistently refused to admit that Sayyid Muhammad Idris was more than the Head of a religious Order, were in the new circumstances compelled to accept his offer of help as coming from a person who could act in a political sense and for the whole population of Cyrenaica. The Sayyid had, therefore, to be recognized as an Amir and to be permitted to recruit his own army under the Sanusiya flag. The Bedouin of Cyrenaica could only take part in a world struggle between states as a unit within their structure, as a political unit of the same order as the other allied countries, which were autonomous states acting through their own governments in their relations with the British Government and Armed Forces. The recognition of Sayyid Muhammad Idris as a political leader was easier for the British in that in war national sentiment is at a high pitch and those engaged in the struggle are particularly sensitive to national aspirations and sympathetic towards them. They are then anxious to placate national movements in their own empires and to encourage those in the empires of their opponents. To the British all the people of Cyrenaica were Sanusi and they so spoke of themselves in their dealings with British troops, and not as members of particular tribes or as citizens of particular towns. Through the long years of struggle Bedouin and townsmen alike had come to identify their interests with those of the Sanusiya Order, and to see in the Order the symbol of their particularist aspirations. 'Sanusi' had become a word which could be translated 'Cyrenaican'. It had ceased to have a religious content and had acquired a purely political one.

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II

*175 *648 This is a history of the Sanusi of Cyrenaica and not of Italy so that there is no need to record the domestic and international circumstances in which Italy went to war with Turkey. Nor is it necessary to narrate the reasons the Italians gave for their declaration of war. Italy had certain historic claims to a sphere of influence in Libya and her strategic interests in the coast of Africa opposite her shores are obvious. It is easy to understand

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*175 *648 equipped. Coro says that at the end of May 1911 they had, not counting officers, 3,010 men in Tripolitania and 1,200 men in Cyrenaica.[1] The Italian expeditionary force consisted of 34,000 men, 6,300 horses, 1,050 wagons (*carri*), 48 field guns, and 24 mountain guns; and the Italians counted on being able to ship to Africa all the reserves and modern equipment that might be required were resistance to prove stronger than was expected. At the height of the campaign, when Italy entered the Great War, she had about 60,000 troops in Libya. It looked therefore as though the Turks had no chance of putting up more than a token resistance, and the Italians certainly expected a walk-over and were surprised, then alarmed, at the resistance they had to overcome. They were dilatory and over-cautious after their main landing at Tripoli, hanging about in the town instead of pushing on into the interior before the Turks had time to organize resistance and attract Arab volunteers. In Cyrenaica also they delayed too long their advance into the interior and gave the Bedouin time to come to the assistance of the Turks and for some adventurous young Turkish officers, among them men who were later to make names for themselves in world history, to reach the field from Turkey. The Italians also under-estimated the skill and pluck of the Turkish soldiers and they misjudged—the worst of their miscalculations—the attitude of the Arab population of Libya to the war. They believed that the Arabs were so irate with the Turks that they would not assist them and might even turn against them. Indeed, so confident were the Italians of Bedouin support that, according to local statements, they were themselves supplying them with arms in Cyrenaica for some months before the outbreak of war.

*175 *648 *795 • 793 Looking back it is easy to see that another blunder was made in taking it for granted that the Sanusiya Order was hostile to the Turks to the point of being willing to remain outside the dispute or even to co-operate with a Christian Power to be rid of them. If the Head of the Order—'*Il famoso papa nero*', as the Italian press, most inappropriately, used to call him—wanted to create for himself an independent kingdom in North Africa, as it was supposed that he did, it seemed likely that he would have been glad to see the Turks driven out of Libya. But, apart from the fact that the Sanusiya and the Ottoman

[1] Coro, op. cit., p. 121.

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Governors had generally, in spite of occasional disagreements, managed to rub along together in a spirit of live and let live, it is difficult to understand how the Italians could have imagined that the Sanusiya Shaikhs would have preferred them to the Turks who, after all, were Muslims, if not very good ones, and sometimes personal friends as well; especially in view of the low opinion the Arabs of the Near East generally had formed of Italians in comparison with other Europeans. Also, if they had hoped for help or neutrality from the tribes and the Sanusiya, and they undoubtedly did hope for it, one might have expected that they would have prepared for it by making direct contact earlier with the persons of chief influence among the parties. That they did not do so may be attributed in part to over-confidence and in part to over-estimation of the assurances of such crafty citizens of Banghazi as 'Uthman al-'Anaizi and 'Umar al-Kakhiya. Mansur al-Kakhiya was indeed sent in 1912 to Kufra to bribe Sayyid Ahmad, without result, and there were some further vague semi-official efforts made in 1913 and 1914 to get into touch with the head of the Order, but they also came to nothing.

III

War was declared on Turkey on 29 September 1911 and opened with the bombardment of Darna town on the following day and of Tripoli town a few days later. During October the Italians occupied Tripoli, Tubruq, Darna, Banghazi, and Khums. The disembarkation at Banghazi was against a rough sea and stiff opposition. After this initial resistance the Turkish garrison withdrew to the interior, as did their garrisons in the other coastal towns of Libya, since they could be shelled from Italian warships without being able to reply, their few coastal guns having a very restricted range. The garrison made Banina, about 12 km. to the east of Banghazi, their headquarters and here they were quickly joined by contingents of all the Bedouin tribes of western Cyrenaica with the Shaikhs of the Sanusiya lodges at their head. The Turkish garrison had from the beginning been in consultation with Shaikh Ahmad al-'Isawi, the Sanusiya representative at Banghazi and the Head of its zawiya there; and he wrote to all the Shaikhs of the tribal lodges in the

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*175 *648 *795 [793] neighbourhood asking them to recruit volunteers for war.[1] In doing so he was, according to local information, acting on instructions received from Sayyid Ahmad al-Sharif who, though he was in distant Kufra, seems to have been well aware, as indeed was everyone concerned, of Italian intentions. The tribal bands, following the Sanusiya Shaikhs, poured into Banina and put heart into the small Turkish garrison. Strengthened daily by tribal reinforcements the Turco-Arab force on the Banghazi front was able to contain the Italians in the town till 'Aziz Bey al-Masri (later Inspector-General of the Egyptian Army) arrived to direct operations. The Turkish garrison at Darna, which had also retired behind the town, was reinforced in the same way by the tribes of eastern Cyrenaica, roused and led by the Shaikhs of the tribal lodges of the Sanusiya in that part of the country. When Enver Bey (later Turkish Minister for War) arrived by camel from Egypt he took charge of the Darna sector, where he was assisted by Mustafa Kamal (Ata Turk, later the first President of the Turkish Republic). A third camp was established in the Marmarica near Tubruq under command of another young Turkish officer, Adham Pasha al-Halabi. Here [793] also the Turkish garrison was joined by the local tribes and the Shaikhs of their lodges. The Turkish Commanders always took the Shaikhs of the tribes and lodges into consultation.

Without these tribal reinforcements the Turks certainly could not have continued for long to resist. As it was, resistance not only became possible, but the whole character of the war changed, both in Cyrenaica and in Tripolitania, where the Bedouin also flocked to the Turkish standards. It ceased to be a war in which a foreign power was trying to seize its colonies from a tired empire, and became a colonial war in the traditional sense of a European power attempting to deprive a native people of their liberty and their land. In Cyrenaica it became, in fact, more and more an Italo-Sanusi, rather than an Italo-Turkish, war and ended as a simple struggle of the Bedouin of Cyrenaica under Sanusiya leadership for freedom from a foreign yoke.

*175 *648 Enthusiastic though they were, the Bedouin who poured into the Turkish camps were in no sense soldiers. Full of spirit, courageous to the point of recklessness, their one aim was to

[1] Muhammad al-Akhdar al-'Isawi, *Rafu' al-Sitar*, pp. 13–18.

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as the Sultan's representative. If the Head of the Sanusiya Order could have been mistaken in the early stages of the war for no more than a benevolent spectator whose real attitude was unknown, the illusion was now dispelled. After Enver's visit to Jaghbub all official correspondence and documents from the Headquarters of the Order were stamped '*al-Hakuma al-Sanusiya*', the Sanusiya Government. The Order now claimed the status of a government of a semi-autonomous State and as such it led the resistance to Italian arms.

The small Turkish garrisons thus had behind them all the Bedouin of the country—the townsmen were sympathetic, but soft and of little account one way or the other—and behind the Bedouin the Sanusiya Order. They were fortified also by the knowledge that behind the Sanusiya was the moral backing of the whole Arab and Muslim world, and even of peoples who were neither Arab nor Muslim. Throughout the Near East in particular, but also everywhere in the world where coloured peoples were articulate, the struggle was seen to have a deeper significance than a mere transfer of territories from Turkey to Italy, or the mere acquisition of another bit, one of the few remaining bits, of Africa by a European Power. Like a great octopus, Europe had stretched out its tentacles to seize and exploit the whole of Africa and Asia. The tentacle which now held Tripolitania and Cyrenaica in its grip belonged to the same beast which held half the world in its clutches. It was not the future of a handful of Bedouin which was being decided, but the future of Europe.

The Muslim world could do little to help their fellow Muslims, but they showed their indignation. The Arab and Muslim press railed against the Italians. The Bedouin boys sent by Enver from Cyrenaica to be educated in Turkey were everywhere on their journey received with acclamation as the sons of the brave Libyan *mujahidin*, the fighters for the faith. A Sanusi mission to Istanbul to do homage to the Caliph, though not received by him for diplomatic reasons, found plenty of support, especially in 'Young Turk' circles. Committees to collect funds for the war were formed in Egypt, Turkey, Syria, the Hijaz, and other parts of the Near East. An Egyptian Red Crescent Society was formed to look after the Libyan sick and wounded. A British Red Crescent Society was also founded in

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1912 for the same purpose by British sympathizers with the Arab cause and Indian Muslims.

V

On 13 April 1913 Gen. d'Alessandro attacked the Turco-Arab camp at Banina and after 10 hours' heavy fighting took it by assault, killing 200 men and capturing about 50 prisoners and much equipment. The Turco-Arabs from this time onwards abandoned any further attempt to hold a line and organized resistance gave way to the kind of guerrilla warfare the country, inferiority in numbers and arms, and lack of military training of the Arabs indicated as the most appropriate tactics. The Italians were therefore able to advance rapidly in column in the grand style and to defeat Arab bands wherever they met them by superiority in numbers and fire power. They occupied Bu Mariyam, al-Abyar, Taukra, al-Baniya, and Jardis al-'Abid. While this column, the 2nd Division under Gen. d'Alessandro, was advancing on Jardis al-'Abid a second column, the 4th Division under Gen. Tassoni, disembarked at Talmaitha after a sharp engagement, and from there advanced on al-Marj and took the village. The two Divisions then met at Jardis al-'Abid. From there the 4th Division moved eastwards and in mid-May took without much opposition Marawa, Slanta, Shahhat, Marsa Susa, and other points. The ease with which they were able to march through the country and the way in which the Bedouin bands nine times out of ten gave way to them on the field, made the Italians take too optimistic a view of the campaign. They had yet to learn that marching from point to point and occupying the points does not make any great impression on an enemy for whom places have little significance, and that it is one thing to force Bedouin bands to give ground and quite a different thing to conquer a hardy and elusive people scattered over a wild and rugged country. The whole country was up in arms and the general will to resistance was now strengthened by the arrival on the field of Sayyid Ahmad al-Sharif from Jaghbub and a Turco-Arab victory shortly afterwards, an event the Bedouin naturally attributed to the Sayyid's *baraka*. This victory was in the Darna sector. [793] ● [795] * [778]

After the fighting in the autumn on the periphery of the town

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there had been little activity on this front till late in the spring of 1913. The Turco-Arab camp was at Sidi 'Aziz, where they had some thousands of men, mostly tribal volunteers, and a few cannon and machine-guns. The Darna command decided to destroy this force in order to link up with the Tassoni column driving towards the town from the west. On 16 May 1913 the Italians launched an attack with some 5,000 men, three batteries of field guns, and a machine-gun section, under Gen. Mambretti. The fighting went against the Italians who lost their nerve and fled in disorder, losing 10 officers and 60 men besides 400 wounded, missing, or taken prisoner. They also lost a battery of guns and much equipment. The battle of Sidi al-Qarba', or of the *yaum al-juma'*, the Friday, as the Bedouin generally speak of it, prevented the further advance eastwards of the Tassoni column and the planned pincer movement between this column and the Darna force. It also threw Sayyid Ahmad into relief as the head of the resistance. At this point the Turks began to fade into the background and the Sanusiya Order and its Head to take responsibility for the direction of resistance. The defeat of Friday also involved the Tassoni column in a series of indecisive actions conducted from their forts during the summer months, in which the Turco-Arabs had the initiative, though they usually suffered heavier casualties than the Italians through inferior fire power and drill. Nevertheless, Italian losses were not negligible, their heaviest casualties in a single engagement being 100 dead, including 6 officers, when one of their units was surprised at Safsaf. Meanwhile in western Cyrenaica Suluq and Qaminis were occupied. On the whole plateau what for a colonial war may be regarded as heavy fighting and large-scale engagements continued to take place throughout the late summer and the autumn of 1913: the Turco-Arab force in a fight at 'Ain bu Shimal, 10 km. to the south-west of 'Ain Mara, on 6 October, was said to have numbered as many as 3,000 men. The Italian success at 'Ain bu Shimal enabled them to effect a junction between their forces in the Shahhat and Darna zones. Under this pressure Sayyid Ahmad al-Sharif withdrew to the west, where he made Msus and its neighbourhood his headquarters from October 1913 till he moved to the Marmarica to take part in the closing scenes of the first Italo-Sanusi war.

By the end of 1913 the campaign had broken up into a series

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THE SAYYID AHMAD AL-SHARIF (MACALUSO)

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*175 *648 *795 was left to it in these regions was the isolated oasis of Kufra. He had by his foolish attack on the British brought about the destruction of the lodges of the Order and of its political influence in the Western Desert of Egypt. Tripolitania had also been lost to the Sanusiya, though it was by this time almost entirely free from Italian domination. Ramadan al-Shtaiwi of Misurata barred its way into Old Tripolitania. Fazzan was in a state of anarchy. All that remained to the Order was its original North African core—the tribes of Cyrenaica and its Cyrenaican lodges—for in spite of all their defeats and miseries the Bedouin of the country still remained loyal to the Order whose interests were their own. The Italians were very far from having conquered these Bedouin and the history of the Order from the time of Sayyid Ahmad's departure is identical with the history of their continued resistance to the Italians under its leadership, first by diplomacy, then again by arms. With its empire and its dependence on the Sultanate the Order lost also its religious character and became, through its exclusive identification with the interests of the people of Cyrenaica, an almost purely political movement.

*175 *648 793 159 [142] Although there were for many years rumours, greeted with great enthusiasm by the Bedouin and with nervous apprehension by the Italians, of Sayyid Ahmad's impending return to Cyrenaica he never again set foot on the African continent. Born in 1873, Sayyid Ahmad al-Sharif was still in the early forties when he left for Turkey. He was described at this time as a man of medium height, stout, for an Arab on the dark side, with a firm and determined face adorned with a small moustache, close-cut whiskers on the upper jaw, and close-cut beard.[1] The Sayyid was obstinate, impulsive in his judgements and impetuous in his actions, and he seems to have been proud, quarrelsome, and fanatical. He was not prepared to compromise, and the British and Italians were in entire agreement that no understanding could be reached with him. But he was a pious Muslim and a brave and loyal man, tenacious of his beliefs, stubborn in his upholding of them against overwhelming odds, and dignified in their defeat. There was a certain wildness in his schemes and recklessness in his execution of them which compel admiration.

[1] Admiralty War Staff, Intelligence Division, 26 May 1915.

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After his departure from North Africa, Sayyid Ahmad continued to lead an adventurous life. His wars against France, Italy, and Great Britain had made him a world figure, and in the eyes of Muslims one of the foremost fighters for Islam of his time. He was much sought after by the pan-Islamists of Istanbul, who wished to use his name in their propaganda directed to bringing Turks and Arabs more closely together. In April 1921 he was designated King of Iraq at the Assembly of Angora, but Faisal, backed by the British, had the advantage of him in this project. He and his name played a big part in persuading the Muslim minorities of Turkey to throw in their lot with Mustafa Kamal. After Mustafa Kamal's victories Sayyid Ahmad returned to Istanbul, where he tried to re-establish the Caliphate, a project for which Mustafa Kamal showed less enthusiasm. Early in 1922 we find him at Urfa making peace between the great Bedouin tribes of Shammar and 'Anaza. We then find him at Marsina trying to reunite Syria to Turkey. From there he went to live at Damascus. The French found his presence in Syria embarrassing and expelled him from the country in December 1924. Thence he went to the Hijaz, where he remained till his death at al-Madina on 10 March 1933. During the last years of his life he took less interest in politics. He seems to have won the personal respect of King Ibn Sa'ud, and he was called upon to settle local disputes, the most notable of his achievements as peacemaker being a settlement of the quarrel between the Amir Idris of 'Asir, the descendant of the Grand Sanusi's teacher at Mecca, and the Imam Yahiya of the Yaman, but he mainly lived in retirement among his books. He lived just long enough to see the Sanusi cause to all appearances as finally extinguished in Cyrenaica as it had been elsewhere.

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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CHAPTER VI

THE PERIOD OF THE ACCORDS (1917–23)

I

*175 *648 SAYYID Idris's approaches to the allied powers eventually led to the British High Commissioner in Egypt, Sir Henry McMahon, sending Col. Milo Talbot, a man of integrity and with a considerable knowledge of North African affairs, to represent his country in the negotiations. Col. Talbot, accompanied by his Egyptian secretary Ahmad Muhammad Hasanain (later the famous explorer of the Libyan Desert), left Alexandria on 25 May 1916 and after preliminary discussions at Rome joined the Italian delegates, Col. Villa and Com. Piacentini, at al-Zuwaitina; and there also awaited him the Idrisis of Luxor, descendants of that Sayyid Ahmad bin Idris al-Fasi who had been the Grand Sanusi's teacher at Mecca. They had been sent to Cyrenaica at Sayyid Idris's request to assist him in the negotiations. Sayyid Idris himself was camped some miles away in the interior with his counsellors and supporters.

*175 *648 *795 ● 793 Discussions between Italy and England about the Sanusi had begun in February 1915 and an understanding had been reached on 31 July 1916, adhered to by France in March 1917, by which each undertook not to sign an agreement with the Sanusi without the consent of the other and to recognize Sayyid Idris as Head of the Sanusiya Order. It was clearly stipulated that the Sayyid should not be afforded recognition as an autonomous ruler, though the possibility of allowing him, under the sovereignty of the occupying State, administrative autonomy of some of the oases might be examined. On this point the Italians had earlier shown themselves to be very sensitive and the British Government had felt it expedient to assure them that it did not favour Sayyid Ahmad's claims to independence, pointing out to them that the recognition of Sayyid Ahmad as a secular ruler would be harmful to England as well as to Italy since it would involve the British Government in awkward frontier questions in the Marmarica.[1] Col. Talbot's instructions

[1] Bruno Aglietti, 'La Confraternita Senussita', *Oriente Moderne*, Jan.–June, 1946, pp. 6–9.

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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in the negotiations state explicitly that Sayyid Idris was to be regarded as a spiritual leader and not as a temporal leader.

Sayyid Idris had his first meeting with the Allied Mission on 25 July 1916 and the three-cornered discussions were spread out over the months of August and September. Between the Sanusi and the British there were easy relations from the beginning. Sayyid Idris had made friends with the British in Cairo, trusted them, and desired that the trust might be mutual. The British, for their part, were far from unsympathetic towards the Sanusi, and those who had met him respected the sincerity of their leader. Col. Talbot, while remaining on excellent terms with the Italian delegates, kept the confidence of the Sayyid, although he had sometimes, on behalf of the Italians, to press him to accept demands of which he personally disapproved and which could in no way serve British interests. He found little difficulty in obtaining the release of the British crew of the *Coquet*, who had for some time been prisoners in Sanusi hands.

Italo-Sanusi relations were very different. Sayyid Idris disliked the Italians and he thoroughly distrusted their intentions. The Italians suspected that Sayyid Ahmad and Sayyid Idris were in collusion, though pretending to be at variance, and aimed only at obtaining a temporary truce which would ensure entry into the country of supplies destined for a renewal of the struggle later; and they were resentful of the British, who, they thought, intended to relieve themselves of an embarrassment at the expense of Italy. It was soon evident that there was little hope of a permanent settlement, so a *modus vivendi* was sought which would at least give both sides a chance to recuperate.

At the beginning of the discussions the Italians said that they could only continue them if their prisoners were released, but the Sayyid had no intention of giving them up without a *quid pro quo* and adopted his usual delaying tactics when faced with demands of this kind, pleading that he would first have to ask permission of Sayyid Ahmad who had taken the prisoners, since he could not give one set of instructions and his cousin contrary ones. As Sayyid Ahmad was still at al-Kharja oasis, consultation by camel-mail could be relied on to delay the issue for some weeks. However, largely owing to Col. Talbot, agreement on this point was achieved, only to be overruled by the Italian Government at Rome, which considered its terms humiliating,

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on the grounds that its delegates had not been empowered to sign it. They were recalled and replaced by Maj. Riccardi and Gen. Ameglio, who were to continue the negotiations from Banghazi. Sayyid Idris thought that he had been deliberately tricked and wanted to know whether any future engagements entered into with the Italians might be revoked in the same way. Col. Talbot was also irritated at Rome's action, since it was he who had persuaded the Sayyid to sign the agreement. Negotiations were thereupon broken off for some months and Col. Talbot and his staff returned in October to Cairo to report to the High Commissioner.

Interference of this kind from Rome and Banghazi was one of the difficulties which beset the negotiations. Another difficulty was Sayyid Idris's diplomatic technique, simple and effective, but none the less fatiguing. When faced with a demand he did not wish to accept but was unable to refuse outright he pleaded, often justly, that it would be useless for him to agree to terms his followers would reject. If this plea failed he raised all sorts of difficulties and delays on one pretext or another, and if hard pressed, pleaded ill health, or lapsed into phlegmatic indifference. This technique of attrition—what one Italian writer called his '*esasperante tattica temporeggiatrice*'[1]—was perhaps the best the Sayyid could have employed in the circumstances.

The discussions at al-Zuwaitina had not, however, been wasted. They had enabled Col. Talbot to know the Sayyid and, by a survey of the military situation at first hand and an initial assessment of the major problems, better to advise his Government. The discussions had made it clear that the Sayyid would agree neither to the release of the Italian prisoners nor to any further proposal unless the Allied Mission met him on the question of al-Sallum. The Sanusi received most of their supplies through this port, and if the British continued their blockade of it they would starve. Col. Talbot knew he could exact compliance in other matters in return for this concession, but he also knew that if the Sayyid did not obtain it for his people they might follow the intransigent Sayyid Ahmad, and the whole point of the negotiations was to prevent this. He felt, therefore, that he should urge the Italian delegates to meet

[1] Serra, op. cit., p. 93.

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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the Sayyid's wishes in this matter, both to uphold the Sayyid's prestige among his own people and to make him keep to his promises, particularly about the Allied prisoners and the Turkish officers, under threat of closing the port should he recant. There were in Cyrenaica still many Turkish officers urging the Bedouin to continue the struggle and Sayyid Idris had promised to round them up should al-Sallum be opened to trade. The question of the Turks was bound up with the al-Sallum issue because, as the Sayyid pointed out, Turkey had kept his people supplied by submarine, and while the Allies continued their blockade he could not afford to break with her.

Another problem was the immediate dispersal of the Sanusi fighting bands, or 'dors' (*adwar*), on which the Italian delegates insisted. It would have been foolish for the Sayyid to have disbanded his forces while discussions were proceeding, since it was their presence in the field which compelled the Allies to negotiate. He urged that it would be useless for him to agree to the dispersal of the bands, because they had no intention of dispersing and he had no means of forcing them to do so. The only result would be the loss of his prestige among his followers, who would say that he had become 'Italianized'. These bands continued to be a bone of contention between the Sanusi and the Italians for the next six years, and the issue was only settled by the military subjugation of the whole of Cyrenaica in 1932.

It was a question of importance to the Italians, because the answer to it was also the answer to what they regarded as the fundamental question of sovereignty. On this point the Sayyid was unyielding. He argued that his family, like the Arab princes of Arabia, had never accepted such demands as the Italians made, even from the Turks, fellow Muslims ruled by the Caliph of Islam; and he insisted that the British, who had everywhere shown themselves to be friends to the Arabs, should not press those of Cyrenaica to accept Italian sovereignty, which was the issue of the war and could only be imposed on a defeated people. The British regarded the question of sovereignty as a theoretical one and could not understand why the Italians attached so much importance to it.

Col. Talbot thought they should be content with the occupation of the ports and other centres, as the British were in Egypt,

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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Cyrenaica itself; while if the Italians were too greedy, they could break off negotiations and limit their further participation in the Sanusi war to defensive action along the Egyptian frontier, leaving the Italians to validate their claim to sovereignty by force of arms. Italian diplomatic strength lay in the agreement by which England had bound herself that she would not conclude a separate peace with the Sanusi. They knew that the British were eager—Col. Talbot was always trying to expedite the discussions—to end their military commitments in this theatre and they were, therefore, able to bring pressure on Sayyid Idris through them. The Sayyid's strength lay in his weakness. To obtain an effective truce, the Allies would have to back him personally, and they could only do this by making concessions.

Dummy, Sayyid Idris's absent partner in this game, was his cousin Sayyid Ahmad. Till recently Sayyid Ahmad had been undisputed leader of the Sanusi, and were he to appear on the scene again, the Bedouin would probably follow him. As neither he nor the Italians were prepared to negotiate with one another, and as the British also had no wish to negotiate with him, his reappearance would mean renewal of the fighting. The only way in which it could be prevented was by making a success of the discussions with Sayyid Idris. The Allied Mission felt the presence of this uncompromising man at the conference of al-Zuwaitina, although he was far away in the oasis of al-Kharja.

II

Peace was so clearly in the interests of all that the temporary breakdown of the talks at al-Zuwaitina did not lead to further hostilities on either side, and was regarded by both as an interlude between two phases in the negotiations. The talks were resumed in the Marmarica in January 1917. The Allied Mission lived at Tubruq and the Sayyid at 'Akrama, about 40 km. distant. The Idrisis of Luxor, father and son, were again present and, as before, flitted between the two parties. The Italians were represented by Col. De Vita and Com. Pintor. Sayyid Ahmad was at Siwa.

The talks began well and by 27 March the exchange of Italian and Sanusi prisoners was at last effected. In return for the

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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THE SAYYID MUHAMMAD IDRIS

[facing P. 144]

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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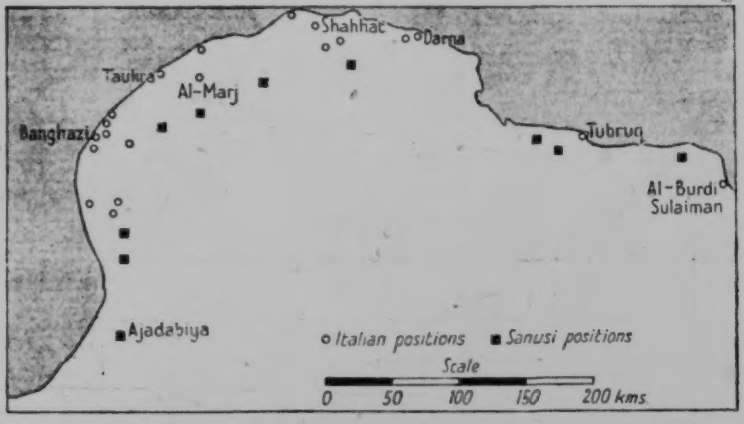
only on condition that nothing reached Turco-German hands. No Sanusiya lodges were to exist on Egyptian soil (they had already been razed to the ground in the Marmarica), though alms might be collected from Egyptian adherents to the Order. Sayyid Idris's property in Egypt was to be respected. Jaghbub oasis, though in Egypt, was to be administered by the Sayyid.

The agreement signed at 'Akrama settled affairs between the Sanusi and the British. The British got the military security



The disposition of Italian and Sanusi positions in October 1916.

they needed. The terms were very favourable to the Sanusi. The *status quo* was preserved, the Italians being left in control of those parts of Cyrenaica in which they had established themselves—the coastal towns and a few inland posts—and the Sanusiya Order retaining the rest of the country. The Sayyid had saved the organization of the Order his grandfather had founded in Cyrenaica, and though he was not formally recognized as more than the Head of a religious Order he was, in fact and of necessity, treated as though he were, as indeed he was, also the secular ruler of an independent people. The accords were signed without consultation with the Turks and without their consent, so whereas Sayyid Ahmad had fought the Italians and British as representative of the Sultan, his cousin made peace with them in his own right.

The least satisfied party were the Italians. They had embarked on a colonial war and had not been successful in waging

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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hold their posts. In 1919 they began to establish civil government in the territory under their control and to extend their influence farther afield. On 31 October of that year Cyrenaica was given a constitution similar to that given to Tripolitania, and its parliament first met in April 1921 under the unlikely presidency of Sayyid Safi al-Din, the old enemy of the Italians in the Sirtica. The tribesmen, of course, elected their own Shaikhs. It held altogether five sessions up to March 1923, when it was closed down. From the Italian point of view the best that could be said for the constitution was that it implied a tacit acceptance of sovereignty and that a parliament brought their officials into personal touch with tribal leaders. Writers of the Fascist period, when the Wilsonian sentiments which inspired the Libyan constitutions were regarded with disfavour, strongly criticized the Government of the day for granting them. Thus Gaibi says that they were bound to bear evil fruit and that 'the Government thought to present itself as a magnanimous conqueror, and the Libyans thought it a beaten coward'.[1] The Bedouin certainly distrusted and despised the Italians and cared as little for their authority in Cyrenaica as their brothers cared for it in Tripolitania. About 100 of their Shaikhs met at Ajadabiya, where they issued a manifesto declaring that, constitution or no constitution, they would not tolerate the Italians outside the coastal towns, and there only as traders. To this insult the Government lamely responded by opening new conversations. After long discussions between the Colonial Governor, Giacomo de Martino, and 'Umar Pasha al-Kakhiya, representing Sayyid Idris, and an exploratory visit by Sayyid al-Rida to Rome, it was agreed that the *modus vivendi* of 'Akrama should be superseded by a new pact, the Accord of al-Rajma of 25 October 1920.

By this new agreement Sayyid Idris was given the hereditary title of 'Sanusi Amir' with the honorific address of Highness and was created Head of the autonomous administration of the oases of Jaghbub, Aujila, Jalu, and Kufra, with the right of using Ajadabiya as the seat of his administration. He was granted a personal monthly allowance of L. 63,000 (on the day of the signing of the accord the Lira was 92 to the Pound

[1] Agostino Gaibi, *Manuale di Storia politico-militare delle Colonie Italiane*, 1928, p. 531.

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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Sterling) and was allowed his own flag, the first place of honour after the Governor on official occasions, a salute of guns on official visits, and the use of an official steamer. Sums of money amounting to L. 93,000 were to be paid in monthly allowances to members of his family. In addition the Government undertook to pay the police and military necessary to maintain order within the area under the Amir's administrative control, and a further L. 2,600,000 to meet the Amir's general expenses, of which L. 300,000 was to be in gold, and half this sum, including the gold portion, was to be paid on the signing of the accord and the other half on the suppression of the armed Sanusi camps. The Italians also subsidized tribal Shaikhs and zawiya Shaikhs and they paid stipends to the Members of Parliament. Notables, zawiya officials, qadis, scribes, chiefs of irregular bands, political counsellors, and informers, were all on the Italian pay-roll. The Italians were, in fact, bribing the whole country to keep quiet. The Italian Government further undertook to act in agreement with the Amir in making appointments to posts within the territory entrusted to his administration; recognized his right to move about freely; permitted the oases to send representatives to the local parliament; allowed the population to keep their arms; and guaranteed exemption of the Sanusiya lands from taxation. It specifically and solemnly declared that it had no intention of expropriating Arab lands, privately or collectively owned, or endowments of the Order, in favour of colonists. On his side the Sayyid promised to aid the Government in the application of the new constitution; to suppress within eight months the camps and posts and other Sanusi organizations of a political, administrative, or military character in the territory not entrusted to his administration; to keep his army to 1,000 men, subject to increase by mutual agreement; to encourage trade and communications; and not to tax the population other than by collection of religious tithes without coercion.

It was felt by the Italian Government that though in this new pact it had to make considerable concessions it had gained in return a more definite acceptance of its claim to sovereignty over the whole of Cyrenaica, which was henceforth divided into two zones, Cyrenaica proper under direct Italian administration and the oases under Sanusiya administration. The Sanusiya,

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949- MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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as well as Italy, had been forced to compromise. Critics of the Fascist period were later to complain that the pact was a blow to Italian prestige in that it virtually recognized 'the existence of two distinct Governments',[1] and Macaluso goes so far as to say that the making of the Sayyid into an Amir 'was the ratification of the undisputed sovereignty of the Sanusiya in Cyrenaica'.[2] Even those who defended the agreement had to admit that the Order was not being treated as a purely religious body, but as a politico-religious fraternity and that there was, therefore, doubt about what its relations with the Italian Government were supposed to be. 'Amir' to the Italians meant Honorary Prince but it had a very different sense to the Arabs. It was, moreover, uncertain whether a seat at Ajadabiya implied that the warlike Magharba tribe of the *barqa* and the Sirtica came within the Sayyid's political orbit or not. On the whole one can say that the Sayyid, or rather the Amir, as we can now call him, bargained autonomy of the oases and the hinterland for his armed camps and administrative posts on the plateau. As he did not, in fact, disband these he may be said to have had the better of the bargain. After the Accord of al-Rajma was signed the Amir visited Rome.

The accord was supplemented by a further agreement known as *Sistemazione definitiva delle zauie* of 16 August 1921 by which nomination, suspension, and transfer of Shaikhs of Sanusiya lodges were to be in the hands of the Amir, but he had to give notice of these acts to the Government, and he promised to remove Shaikhs who embittered relations between the Government and the people. The Government undertook to pay the Shaikhs of lodges (in two categories of L. 900 and L. 600 a month), to hand back to the Order all lodges in its occupation, except those being used as forts, and to pay the sum of L. 500,000 as indemnity for lodges destroyed during the war.[3]

IV

The Italians pretended afterwards that 'Umar al-Kakhiya, who closely followed political events in Italy, had in bad faith, believing that the Socialists were in the ascendant and that

[1] Agostino Gaibi, op. cit., p. 463. [2] Macaluso, op. cit., p. 102.

[3] *L'Occupazione di Cufra*, 1931, pp. 62–3. On 16 August 1921 the Lira was 84 to the Pound Sterling.

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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Italy would therefore withdraw from her colonial adventure, advised the Amir to sign the Accord of al-Rajma in the hope that he would not have to carry out its terms. He was later to spend over 16 years in exile in Italy for his alleged duplicity. The Italians did not at this time charge the Amir with more than weakness when, after the stipulated eight months had passed, he had failed to carry out the terms of the accord, especially in the matter of the armed Sanusi camps.

These camps were supply points garrisoned by the remnants of the Sanusi army of 1917. Through them and from them the Sanusiya was exercising political control over the country and administering the tribes. The chief camps in 1917 were Ajadabiya, al-Shlaidima, Marawa, Khawalan, al-Abyar, Taknis, and 'Akrama. Each was under a *qaimaqam* and had its commandant of troops, its qadi for judicial proceedings, and its tithe collectors who collected from the Bedouin a tax on crops and flocks. With the development of the political functions of the Order alms had been transformed into taxes. Ajadabiya and al-Shlaidima had as their *nazir*, inspector, 'Ali Pasha al-'Abdiya. Al-Abyar and Taknis came under Sidi 'Umar al-Mukhtar, and Marawa, Khawalan, and 'Akrama came under Sayyid Safi al-Din.

When asked why these camps had not been broken up the Amir said that the accord had been very badly received by the Bedouin and that were it to be enforced hastily serious disturbances might ensue. He counselled caution. In addition to the continuance of the armed camps in defiance of the accord, the Italians also complained of concerted passive resistance, on the part of the Shaikhs of Sanusiya lodges and the Shaikhs of tribes, to collaboration with their officials; but either because they were not yet ready to use force or because they were convinced that the Amir was unable to dictate to his followers, and probably for both reasons, they continued to temporize.

By the further Accord of Bu Mariyam of 11 November 1921 the dissolution of the armed camps was confirmed, but it was agreed that until the Italians had strengthened their administrative control and political influence in the country the still-existing Sanusi camps should be held jointly. There were to be four so-called *'Campi Misti'*, at al-Abyar, Taknis, Slanta, and 'Akrama, manned by Italian and Sanusi troops in the

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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in the hands of the Order. Nevertheless, the Rome Government at the time thought, or pretended to think, that the development of events was in their favour and that their propaganda was rapidly costing the Amir and his family their popularity in the country. They constantly, as the Bedouin say when speaking of this period, pushed a stick under the pot to keep it hot till they wanted it to boil over.

The situation at this time in Cyrenaica could not, in any case, have lasted for long. It became clear to all, even before the Fascists gained control in October 1922, that hostilities would sooner or later break out again and matters were being brought to a head by the Amir's attitude on the Tripolitanian issue. The Arabs of Tripolitania, finding themselves in difficulties, sought to extend their front against the Italians by reaching an agreement with the Sanusi, with whom in the past their relations, as we have seen, had not always been cordial. Their leaders held a meeting, at which Sanusi representatives from Cyrenaica were present, at Sirt at the end of 1921 which carried the decisions of the Assembly of Ghariyan a step farther by sending a deputation to Sayyid Idris at Ajadabiya in April 1922 to offer him the Amirate of all Libya. The Sayyid refused to commit himself one way or the other, for he was aware that the Tripolitanian notables who made him the offer had for the most part little regard for his person or for his Order and were merely trying to create a diversion which might draw off some of the Italian forces operating against them. To have replied 'Yes' would have brought him into conflict with Italy. To have replied 'No' would have alienated from him those Tripolitanian Arabs who genuinely sympathized with the Sanusiya. Faced with this dilemma he pleaded ill health early in 1922 and requested the Italian Government to permit him to visit Egypt for two years for rest and treatment. He also, according to Giglio,[1] made the strange request that Sayyid Ahmad be allowed to return to Cyrenaica. Both requests were refused. So was his offer, repeatedly made, to mediate between Italy and the Arabs of Tripolitania, and he was informed, in more forcible terms than he had been accustomed to expect from the Colonial Government, that any interference on his part in the affairs of Tripolitania would be considered a breach of the

[1] Giglio, op. cit., p. 98.

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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Accord of al-Rajma. But the Italians were not yet ready to break with him finally, not wishing to compromise the operations they were carrying out in Tripolitania. They therefore started new discussions, conducted in person by Amendola, the Minister for the Colonies, who, on his return to Italy, expressed satisfaction with the talks and confidence in the Amir, neither of which he could have felt. In Mondaini's opinion the Government's policy of continuing to treat with the Sanusiya at so late a stage was consistent and, in the circumstances, wise, for it was believed that the greed for lucre and honours so unashamedly displayed by members of the Amir's family would bring them into disrepute among the Arabs, while the Government would be able to organize under its administration the zone of the plateau nearest its coastal bases and thus prepare for its penetration into the interior. In defence of Amendola's policy, later subjected to much criticism,[1] Mondaini further observes that the Fascist Government itself delayed action till the spring of 1923 when the Tripolitanian rebellion had been crushed.[2]

Concessions certainly did not lessen tension. The Italians felt that the Sanusiya was using the 'Mixed Camps' as a medium for anti-Italian propaganda, as indeed they were, not only through their official representatives in the camps but also through persons not officially recognized, such as the Sanusiya Shaikhs 'Umar al-Mukhtar, Salih al-'Awwami, and Khalid al-Humri; and they suspected that Shaikh 'Abd al-Aziz al-'Isawi had been sent by the Amir into the Misurata region to act as his liaison with the insurgents there. The Amir had selected for his personal advisers the most recalcitrant of the zawiya Shaikhs. They further accused the Order of responsibility for certain incidents which happened in the late summer of 1922: an attack on an Italian postal car near al-Zawiya al-Baida and the firing of some Italian property at al-Zuwaitina. Rome, said to have been misled by 'Umar Pasha al-Kakhiya, blamed the local government for these incidents and appointed a new Governor who made a further, and as it turned out final, gesture of conciliation by paying to the Amir the remainder of the money owing to him under the Accord of al-Rajma. But nothing could brake the wheels now. Already in August the Committee elected

[1] Giglio, op. cit., p. 99.

[2] Mondaini, op. cit., p. 475.

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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by the Assembly of Sirt had forwarded to Sayyid Idris the *madbata*, dated 28 July 1922, formally investing him with the Amirate of Tripolitania.

Sayyid Idris still hesitated. Before giving a reply he wished to consult Bedouin opinion, for it was on the Bedouin he would have to count were hostilities to break out. To this purpose he called, in October 1922, a large tribal gathering at Jardis al-'Abid. In the following month, under great pressure from his advisers, and still hesitating in his own mind, he accepted the Amirate. It must by this time have been apparent to him that the Italians intended to make war whatever course he took and that he might, in that case, just as well have the Tripolitanian Arabs as allies. In his reply to the Committee he entrusted Tripolitanian affairs to them, under their President Ahmad al-Marayid, until such time as a National Assembly could meet to draw up a constitution. Then, realizing that the fable of the wolf and the lamb was about to be enacted, he fled by caravan to Jaghbub in December 1922 and thence to Egypt, where he had long made financial preparation for this eventuality out of the Italian subsidies. He may also have felt that he had compromised himself so deeply with the Italians over a number of years that his presence in the country could only be an embarrassment to the Bedouin whose martial spirit he could understand but not emulate. He left his brother Sayyid Muhammad al-Rida and his cousin Sayyid Safi al-Din to represent him in Cyrenaica.

Sayyid Idris did not return to Cyrenaica till the third British occupation of the country during the late war (1943), though he continued in Egypt to represent the forces of resistance and, in so far as he could do so without compromising his position as a guest of a country whose Royal House was so intimately bound to the Royal House of Italy, to direct them. At the time of his flight he was 33 years of age. He gave the impression of being tall and rather portly, very unlike the slight and delicate figure he presents to-day. Nurtured, as were all the Sanusi family, in piety and learning in oasis retreats and accustomed to a refined and sedentary life, he has never been a man of action or of a hardy constitution. Though he assisted Sayyid Ahmad in organizing the Sanusi bands at Ajadabiya after the Treaty of Losanna in the first Italo-Sanusi war, he early showed that his

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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talents lay in diplomacy rather than in the field. It is evident from the part he played in the events leading up to the truce and during the period of the truce that he is astute and a man of sound political judgement. That he is often vacillating and evasive cannot be denied, and though these characteristics may sometimes have been a wise response of the weak negotiating with the strong, and may often have served him well in the difficult circumstances in which he took over direction of the Sanusiya Order from Sayyid Ahmad, they seem to be weaknesses to which he is temperamentally prone and to have become an aversion to directness in either thought or action. Italian writers, who are, with some justification, scathing in their comments on most members of the Sanusi family, speak of Sayyid Idris with respect. They admit that he is intelligent, religious, and gifted with a profound moral sense and political intuition. He is firm in decisions once he has taken them and keeps his promises.

At the end of 1922 the Fascist revolution culminated in the march on Rome and the new Government at once made up its mind to reconquer by arms Tripolitania and Cyrenaica. It continued to temporize in Cyrenaica, partly because its position at home was not yet secure, and partly because it intended to finish operations in Tripolitania first. The Fascists felt that their prestige was at stake. The days of *socialdemocrazia* were over and military conquest, domination, and colonization were the order of the day. The ancient Roman provinces were once again to be peopled by the sons and daughters of Rome.

On 6 March 1923 the Italians, without delivering an ultimatum or declaration of war, carried out their secret and long-prepared plan to seize the 'Mixed Camps' and the Sanusi camp of Khawalan, taking about half the Sanusi soldiers prisoners. By this surprise they put out of action a considerable part of the Amir's regular forces. In a proclamation of 1 May 1923 the new Governor of the Colony, Gen. Luigi Bongiovanni—soldiers had replaced civil administrators—declared null and void all accords and conventions made between the Government and the Sanusiya. On the following day the Amir was informed of the step taken by a letter from the Italian Minister in Cairo. War had broken out again in Cyrenaica.

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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than in Tripolitania, and they had learned the reason for this: 175* 648* 795* 619
'Inasmuch as in Cyrenaica the opposition to our rule was not fractionized and enfeebled by the personal ambitions and rivalries of numerous chiefs, but was retrenched and assembled around a single will, the Sanusiya, which manipulated it as it pleased.'[1] They started the war afresh in 1923 with this conclusion firmly fixed in their minds: *delenda est Sanusiya*. But they still believed, not understanding the place of the Order in tribal life, that the attachment of the Bedouin to it was superficial, that it was some kind of parasitic growth which could be cut out of the tribal system. They further believed that their incessant propaganda had already undermined the hold of the Order on the Bedouin.

The Sanusi family, as will be seen, played an inconspicuous 175* 648* 795* 793 554
and inglorious part in the resistance. Italian writers confess surprise that the Bedouin should have continued to show devotion to persons whose character displayed so few of those qualities Bedouin admire. The Bedouin may indeed have expected a higher standard of conduct than some members of the family lived up to, but they did not suppose that they would distinguish themselves as military leaders. They knew that the descendants of the Grand Sanusi had been brought up in the oases to a sedentary and bookish life and not in the hard way of their own children and that they were unsuited to the frugal and exhausting life of a guerrilla. Their duty, in most cases little in evidence in fulfilment, was to pursue holiness and learning that their presence among the people might bring down on them God's blessing. In the eyes of the Bedouin they lacked in full measure the manly qualities of courage and endurance that Bedouin demand in their own folk, but they were credited with the scholarship and sanctity of the religious, which Bedouin admire in their spiritual guides rather than seek to emulate in their own lives. Italian writers sometimes refer to a member of the family accompanying the guerrilla bands, as did Sayyid al-Hasan and Sayyid Saddiq, as having the role of a standard (*insegna*), a word which well describes their peculiar position in the resistance. Where in a man the qualities of *marabat*, holy man, and of *mujahid*, fighter for the faith, were combined, as in Sayyid Ahmad al-Sharif and Sidi 'Umar al-Mukhtar, the

[1] Agostino Gaibi, *Storia delle Colonie Italiane*, 1934, p. 344.

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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SIDI 'UMAR AL-MUKHTAR (GRAZIANI)

[facing p. 168]

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
(1837-1942) Sanusi

Bedouin followed them at great sacrifice. They were combined in many of the Sanusiya Brothers.

The Shaikhs and Brothers of the Order, with few exceptions, played a prominent part in the war, both in the field and by keeping the Bedouin, submitted and unsubmitted alike, in a ferment. The Italian soldiers and administrators constantly complained that whenever the Bedouin were tiring of the struggle the Brothers of the Order urged them to continue it. It was their example and exhortations which made it something more than the usual piecemeal resistance of a barbarous people to colonial conquest or more than a succession of raids of the kind Bedouin have enjoyed for so many centuries. Their participation made it both a national and a religious movement. It did much also to establish the Sanusiya in the hearts of the Bedouin. Some of the best-known names of the resistance, like Salih Lataiwish, 'Abd al-Hamid al-'Abbar, Saifat and Muhammad bu Farwa, Husain al-Juwaifi, Brahim al-Fallah, Fadil al-Mahashash, and Qtait bu Musa, were those of Bedouin Shaikhs, but most of the leading figures were Sanusiya *Ikhwan*, men like 'Umar al-Mukhtar, Yusif bu Rahil, Khalid al-Humri, Sharif al-Mailud, 'Abd al-Qadir Farkash, Fadil bu 'Umar, Salih al-'Awwami, and Muhammad bu Najwa al-Masmari.

The indomitable Sidi 'Umar al-Mukhtar was the soul of the resistance and the struggle is always associated with his name as similar struggles against French aggression in Algeria and Morocco are associated with the names of 'Abd al-Qadir and 'Abd al-Karim. Sidi 'Umar, 'our irreducible enemy, the faithful and able servant of Idris, the heart and soul of the Cyrenaican rebellion', as Graziani called him,[1] was that rare combination of Bedouin and Sanusiya Shaikh. He was born about 1862 of the *'Ailat* Farhan of the Braidan section of the Minifa tribe of the Marmarica and was educated first at the Sanusiya school at Janzur and afterwards at Jaghbub. He was nominated by Sayyid Ahmad al-Sharif Shaikh of al-Qasur lodge among the stubborn 'Abid tribe but only performed his duties there for two years before being summoned to Kufra to serve against the French in the Wadai. He returned to al-Qasur about 1906 and later took a prominent part in the first Italo-Sanusi war and in obstructing Italian penetration in the years of peace which

[1] Op. cit., p. 235.

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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followed it. In 1923, when he was called to take the foremost part in the struggle, he was already over sixty years of age. He was a simple man, religious, courageous, contemptuous of worldly honours and success, and with singular tenacity and powers of physical endurance. It may well be true that, as is reported, Sayyid al-Mahdi said 'If we had ten men like 'Umar we would not need any more'.

IV

All the *adwar*, or guerrilla bands, on the plateau came under Sidi 'Umar's command and he signed himself *al-Naib al-'Amm*, the Representative-General (of the Sanusiya). Each Bedouin tribe, as in Enver's day, maintained its own guerrilla band, some 100 to 300 men strong. Towards the end of the war the guerrillas never numbered, all told, more than 600 to 700. Only a certain number of men could maintain themselves on the country and move through it with speed and secrecy. As in other guerrilla wars, the actual fighting was done by small bands of enthusiasts, whose success nevertheless depended on the goodwill of the whole population. The bands suffered very heavy casualties, but were maintained at strength by a constant stream of adventurous spirits from submitted and unsubmitted sections alike. Though each band was named after a tribe and its members were chiefly recruited from that tribe and fought in its territory, they were not entirely recruited from it and they might fight anywhere. In each tribal band there were a good number of volunteers from other tribes and a sprinkling of *Ikhwan*, Sudanese, and Tripolitanians. The 'Awaqir and Magharba had separate bands while the other tribal bands usually fought in pairs, Hasa–'Abaidat, Bara'asa–Darsa, and 'Abid–'Arafa. A Misuratan contingent formed a small band of its own which greatly distinguished itself in the fighting. Each band had a simple organization: a commander, a *qaimaqam* for civil affairs, a qadi for religious and legal purposes, a commissariat agent, and a number of officers, some of whom had been trained in Turkish regular units. Sidi 'Umar maintained discipline in the bands, and acts of pillage or personal vendetta were severely punished. Those of the guerrillas who possessed horses rode them. The rest went on foot. Each band had its Sanusi flag.

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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When things were quiet members of a band would have their families and herds with them and live in their own tents, but when pressed they left their women and children and beasts in the tents of the submitted population and the only non-combatants in their camps would then be a few female cooks. Before the end of the war many of the Patriots, including Sidi 'Umar, had sent their families to Egypt so that they could act more freely.

There was also a general administration for all the bands and this came directly under Sidi 'Umar. They maintained inter-communication and worked to a common strategy. Guerrilla headquarters had also to arrange for the collection of a tithe from the entire population to help pay for the expenses of the campaign. Throughout the war Sidi 'Umar's tax-collectors were taking tithes from the submitted population, not always without trouble, and were giving written receipts for the payments. The tithe paid by each tribe went to support its own band. Sidi 'Umar had also to arrange for caravans to bring supplies from Egypt, and to supervise their distribution to the armed forces and the payment of customs dues on what went to the civilian population. Sidi 'Umar also kept up correspondence with Sayyid Idris and Sanusi elements and sympathizers in Egypt.

The guerrilla bands were in constant contact with the enemy. One of the most striking features of the campaign was the frequency of the fighting. At some point or other on the plateau a skirmish or larger engagement took place every few days for nearly nine years during the spring and summer months. In the account of the campaign which follows I mention but few of these fights, those which had exceptional importance for the campaign as a whole or as examples of the scale of the fighting. The few mentioned are therefore no indication of the amount of fighting. Its frequency may be judged by Gen. Graziani's statement that in the final year of the war, when resistance, compared with earlier years, was feeble and sporadic, there took place 53 engagements (*combattimenti*) and 210 skirmishes (*conflitti*).[1]

This incessant fighting cannot, as I have already said, be described in the language of text-book logistics in terms of manœuvring, objectives, and battles. Indeed, the Italians had

[1] *Rivista delle Colonie Italiane*, vol. vi (I), 1932, pp. 52–3.

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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*175 *648 *795 situation which had developed there in 1915 seemed likely to develop again. Concerted operations from Cyrenaica and Tripolitania were, therefore, planned. To facilitate them from the Cyrenaican side the Italian line was advanced in March 1927 from Qaminis–Tailimun–Suluq–al-Shlaidima to Ajadabiya–Sawunnu–Msus; and Teruzzi, always an advocate of combining political with military action, decided to try what

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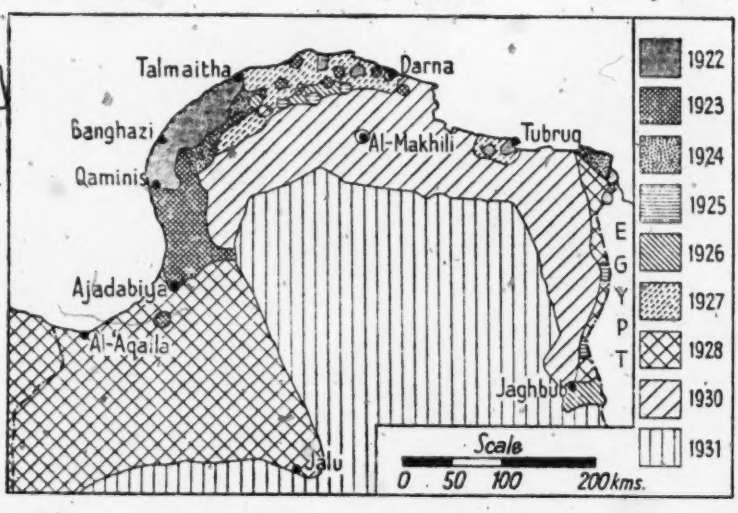

The Italian conquest of Cyrenaica.

[793] [619] diplomacy could do to ease the task of the soldiers. He had some success, with the aid of the treacherous Sanusiya Shaikh Sharif al-Ghariyani, in that he was able to arrange a meeting in June in the *barqa al-baida* with a number of tribal Shaikhs and to persuade 13 of those belonging to the Magharba Shammakh to make submission. This pacification of the Magharba near Ajadabiya, indispensable to operations in the Sirtica, had an immediate result in the uncontested occupation of al-Qatafiya towards the end of September and of al-'Aqaila a few days later. Sayyid Saddiq al-Rida collected a small force to the south of the Wadi al-Farigh to prevent a further advance but neither he nor his father, a man lacking both vigour and spirit, had the character of the Bedouin and both were wavering. The son entered into correspondence with the Italians and the father

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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thirty-two holdings, for the Bedouin showed no inclination to work as serfs the lands they had worked as freemen: 'In their daily attitude coldness and scepticism were apparent so that the part they took in collaborating was purely formal.'[1] A pastoral village, furnished with veterinary and stud services and offices for the collection, classification, and weighing of wool, was built at Nahiba (Jardis al-'Abid) and another was planned to be built at Verde (Jardis al-Jarrari). Some may consider that these measures are evidence of Balbo's sincerity. The Bedouin believed that he intended to destroy them by guile as surely as Graziani had destroyed them with machine-gun and bomb.

V

When Giolitti landed troops in Cyrenaica and Tripolitania in 1911 he started his country on the road to ruin. The first Libyan war was from 1911 to 1917. In the midst of it Italy was involved, from 1915 to 1918, in the first Great War. From 1921 to 1932 she was again engaged in prosecuting her colonial war in Libya, first in Tripolitania, then in Cyrenaica also. From 1934 to 1936 she participated in the Spanish civil war. In 1935 and 1936 she conquered Ethiopia. In 1939 she seized Albania. From 1940 to 1944 she was engaged in the second Great War. It was appropriate that disaster should overcome the Italians in Cyrenaica, that the Bedouin of that country who had suffered so much at their hands should witness their humiliation, and that it should fall on the head of Graziani, who became Governor of Libya when Balbo was killed at Tubruq on 28 June 1940.

As the day of retribution drew near the Italians showed some uneasiness about the situation in Cyrenaica and, as I have recorded, they made belated attempts to conciliate the Arabs. Their uneasiness was partly due to the presence of the Sanusi leader Sayyid Idris and of a number of notable Cyrenaican and Tripolitanian Shaikhs in exile in Egypt. It could hardly be doubted that they would approach the British with offers of assistance should Italy enter the war on the side of Germany. This is what happened. In October 1939, when Italy's participation seemed imminent, the Cyrenaican and Tripolitanian

[1] Giuseppe Palloni, *The Action of the Italian Government in Favour of the Lybian Agriculture*, 1945, p. 31.

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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Shaikhs met at Alexandria and informed the British Ambassador in Cairo that they recognized Sayyid Idris as their Amir and that he could speak on their behalf. At a second meeting of these Shaikhs in Cairo on 9 August 1940, after Italy had declared war, it was decided to form a Libyan force to co-operate with the British army in the Western Desert. Though some of the Tripolitanian notables refused to associate themselves with this offer, wishing to make a separate offer on their own account, it was gladly accepted by the British authorities, and the British-Arab Force, later known as the Libyan Arab Force, was recruited from among the Sanusi exiles in Egypt and later also from Sanusi prisoners of war, who had taken the first opportunity of surrendering to the British. It was officered by British and Arabs, including some of the veterans of the Italo-Sanusi wars, and at its maximum strength consisted of five battalions and a depot. The force was not trained and equipped for the kind of fighting which took place in the Western Desert, but it performed useful ancillary duties to which Mr. Eden paid a tribute in the House of Commons on 8 January 1942, when he declared that His Majesty's Government was determined that the Sanusi should not come again under Italian domination. It took part in the first and subsequent occupations of Cyrenaica by British troops, and two battalions served in the defence of Tubruq in 1941. The little Sanusi army fought under its own flag and Arab commissions in it were in the name of the Amir. The Bedouin of Cyrenaica also rendered services to the British army as guides and agents and in assisting escaped prisoners of war and men detached from their units during our two withdrawals to Egypt. They gave further assistance by their eager co-operation with the three British Military Administrations of their country, although those who were known to have rendered the British special assistance were shot by the Italians on our withdrawals.

When in 1943 Sayyid Idris visited Cyrenaica for the first time since his hurried departure from it in 1922 and was received with wild enthusiasm by the whole country, it was just a century after his grandfather had founded his first zawiya in it. During that century the Sanusiya Order had seen many changes and had itself changed. Even in the Grand Sanusi's time it had some political functions. The best Italian historian of the Order, Carlo Giglio, could write that at the death of its founder the

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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Order was 'not a true and proper State but something very similar'.[1] We have seen how these political functions were further developed under the rule of Sayyid al-Mahdi and how under the rule of Sayyid Ahmad al-Sharif what may justly be called an embryonic State came into being. The Head of the Order was by this time less the religious Head of an Islamic fraternity than the leading representative of a nascent nationalism which became increasingly conscious of itself in the long struggle against the Italians under Sanusiya leadership. In this struggle the Order became more and more a political organization which directed, administratively, economically, and militarily, the entire Bedouin population, and morally the entire population of Cyrenaica, Bedouin and townsmen alike, against the common enemy. When truce was made in 1917, whatever the Italians and British may have asserted to the contrary, they had, in fact, to treat with Sayyid Idris not only as the Head of a religious Order, but also as the Head of a political organization which represented, and alone represented, the political aspirations of a people. As events turned out, the Italians, by destroying the Sanusiya organization, cut out the intervening structure of lodges and Shaikhs and made more evident the political status of the Head of the Order.

What has happened during the century which has passed since the first Brothers of the Order began to build the lodge and till the soil at what is now al-Zawiya al-Baida must be viewed in relation to Bedouin tribal structure. A man coming from outside and with religious authority established himself as Head of the acephalous Bedouin society of Cyrenaica, and circumstances in which that whole society was forced to act for a long period of time against external enemies transformed his religious fraternity into a political organization. The Sanusiya Order from the first identified itself with the Bedouin and laboured to bring about tribal unity under its aegis. Under Turkish rule nationalist tendencies, as distinct from, and overriding, tribal loyalties, were latent, and the role of the Sanusiya within the frame of the Ottoman Empire was still predominantly religious rather than political; but when the Italians sought to subjugate the Bedouin their resistance, in the very clear moral issue presented to them, manifested itself

[1] Op. cit., p. 11.

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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as a nationalist movement, with a corresponding effect on the character of the Sanusiya Order and on the status of its Head. The final stage in the transformation of a religious revival into a political movement was brought about by the clash of European arms. Amid the roar of planes and guns the Bedouin learnt to see themselves more clearly as a single people, the Sanusi of Cyrenaica, in a wider world, and came to be regarded as such by those engaged in the struggle.

5: Peters E-5 (1948-1950) 1967 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
Cyrenaica

1950, but his kind of tyranny was absent from the Cyrenaica of that period. From the mid-nineteenth century until the Italian invasion of 1911, the Sanusi Order established itself, spread its lodges throughout the tribes and in other more remote lands until it became what Evans-Pritchard speaks of as a theocratic empire.[1] The lodges served as areas of sanctuary and their staffs adjudicated disputes. Leaders of the Order had the power to coerce and the Bedouin obeyed. They obeyed out of personal regard for some of them in 1950, but the religious authority previously used by the leaders had given way to the political power they now exercised as functionaries in a state system. In the meantime, the country had been ravaged by the long Italo-Sanusi wars. Throughout the nineteen-thirties after suffering terrible privations and reduction in numbers through slaughter in war, death in concentration camps, and exile, the Bedouin were ruled by the Italians. During the Second World War the armies of three major contestants fought their battles where the Bedouin now tend their flocks and herds. After the war they were left to fend for themselves, with a minimum of administrative interference.

In the light of all this the conception of an equilibrium system is of little heuristic value, still less its derivative concept of a repetitive system. This does not mean, however, that an account of part of the social life of the Bedouin as it existed in 1950 must be nothing more than a disconnected piece of history, unrelated to a prior state of things and wholly useless for the understanding of the contemporary oil-producing cum mixed pastoral-agricultural economy. It would be little more than a piece of social historiography if the analysis was based on the concept of a total social structure of functionally interconnected parts, forming what Leach describes as 'a delicately balanced mechanism rather like the various parts of a wrist watch'.[2] Such a viewpoint would effectively exclude any possible comprehension of changes save those present as part of the dynamics of a system; its only answer to change is an account of a different system. If, instead, attention is focused on the analysis of a field of components arranged in a specific fashion to meet the interests of men at a particular time, it then becomes possible to see how a shift in their positions, the addition of new components, or the elimination of others produces this or that effect. It can make intelligible what has gone before, and if the future cannot be anticipated it can be demarcated within rough limits.

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modern territory of his tribe. See also Hamilton, 1856.

[1] Evans-Pritchard, 1949. In this book a brilliant account is given of the development of the Order, and how it came to unify and provide centralized political leadership for the tribes.

[2] Leach, 1961, p. 6.